

# THE Spiritual Magazine.

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HAFED THE FALSE.

BY WILLIAM HOWITT.

THE champions of *Hafed* against my strictures make a very feeble defence of it. As I expected, the main hook on which they hang their argument, is the fact that I have not read the book in bulk which I have assailed. I shall speedily knock that poor hook out of the wall. True, I have not read the book; and what is more, I never intend to read it. I know a snake in the grass when I see it, and seeing it, don't go any nearer to it, except to knock it on the head. I did not read the book at large. It was not at all necessary. Its falsehood is on its summary, issued by its publishers in characters so large, that it may be read a mile off. What I read was the summary of the book, carefully and skilfully compiled by the publishers to show the main facts and dogmas of the work. It consists of twelve closely printed pages, lucidly and copiously giving all the chapters or sittings, and presenting, as it was intended to do, a very distinct and full idea of the volume. In fact, you have there the sum and substance—the bone and muscle of the book. If a man brings putrid flesh into the market, it is not necessary to eat it wholly up to discover its putrescence; your eyes and nose are sufficiently acute detectors of the carrion. If one could not see the very character and learn the contents of this book, it would be the fault of our own stupidity, not of the substantial details of the publishers. I do not pretend to say that it gave all the falsehoods which the volume contains; it may contain more, but it does not contain less than what I noted. Nobody pretends to dispute the facts which I selected from it; they cannot without stultifying the publishers. There they are, and I maintain—and more firmly

and solemnly than ever—that these facts stamp the book beyond all contradiction to be a gilded pill; a flowery snare; a cunningly seductive stratagem of the arch enemy.

The idea of my highly valued friend, Mr. S. C. Hall, that my attack was premature, and that of the writer in the *Christian News*, that I appeared to have written in hot haste, are not correct. What I wrote was in the most deliberate mood, and after careful study of the facts before me: and after two months of further reflection, I am more convinced than ever, that the book is “a cunningly devised fable,” such as our Lord warned us would come.

If it were painful for my friend, Mr. Hall, to read my opinion of the mischievous character of the book, it was no less painful for me to be compelled from conscience and duty to condemn what he and others approved. But I consider that this question concerns the very foundation of the Gospel, and in such cases all personal feelings vanish before the demands of truth. “Offences must needs come, but woe unto him by whom they come.” Woe to those lying spirits who, clothing themselves as angels of light, mislead the incautious lovers of Christ by flowery diction and well-feigned story. Mr. Hall is enraptured by the style of *Hafed*. But is not the art and ability of the deceiver demonstrated by the air of beauty and reality which he diffuses over his subject? Is the poison less deadly because conveyed in the most delicious wine? Is not the old serpent, who for 6,000 years has been going to and fro in the earth, and walking up and down on it, a master of deceit such as no subtlety of genius of only a mortal date, could compete with in vain. What are the arts of the most practised Jesuits to his arts? In this case he has deceived no few, if not of the very elect, yet of the genuine lovers of Christ and of the truth. I have no hesitation in pronouncing *Hafed*, notwithstanding its fair seeming, the work of the great adversary of our faith. In fact, the Rev. Henry Browning, Rector of St. George with St. Paul, Stamford, quoted by Dr. Sexton in the *Spiritual Magazine* of April, says that he found in *Hafed* an explicit denial of our Lord’s Divinity. What says my friend, Mr. Hall, to this? Does he think a volume which expressly denies our Lord’s Divinity worthy a place on our tables and by our bed-sides with the New Testament—the inspired and revealed Word of God?”

But let us see what the Bible, Old and New, says, from the beginning to the end, of Christ and His mission; and how far it agrees with the pretended visits of Christ to the heathen priests and philosophers for instruction in His youth. From end to end, by patriarchs, prophets and apostles, by God Himself and by Christ Himself, the Bible is one solemn, glorious, and unmis-

takable proclamation of Christianity, as the revelation of God and Christ direct from heaven, and absolutely independent of denying every aid from the wisdom or learning of man. It is one grand demonstration that *Hafed* is a lying spirit; that every such attempted engraftment on the history of the Saviour is a lie and a blasphemy.

Open the Old Testament, and at the very fall of man you come upon God's promise of a Redeemer, saying to the serpent, "The woman's seed shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." (Genesis iii. 15.) This Redeemer was promptly appointed by God to be of the seed of Abraham: "And in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (xii. 3.) The whole was to be blessed in the seed of Abraham; not in that of heathen priests and philosophers, however wise. Abraham, as the channel of this promised Messiahship, was separated from the heathen nations, to be the father of the isolated race in whom the knowledge of the true God and His Christ should be scrupulously perpetuated. Abraham knew this well, and the profound responsibility which is laid upon him, and, therefore, when he sent his steward to seek a wife for his son Isaac, from his own kindred, he warned him solemnly, saying "Beware that thou bring not my son thither again." (Genesis xxiv. 3.) Abraham knew well that the Divine truth must be held in direct and undivided commission from heaven; that the heathen must have no access to it, or influence upon it, till in the fulness of time, it should be revealed by Christ.

When the Israelites came into the land selected for them, in which, to keep alive the true faith, they were strictly prohibited all communion with the Gentiles, lest they should learn their abominations. (Deut. xxiii. 9.) To keep the true knowledge apart from and uncontaminated by the Gentiles, God sent continually angels and prophets, refeeding, refreshing the fire of his Divine law in their souls. Moses told them that "No nation ever had God so nigh them in all things; giving them statutes and judgments of that so righteous law, speaking to them directly out of the fire and out of the cloud; and doing such wonders." (Deut. iv. 7, 8—12.) Thus open intercourse with God continued a thousand years, through David, Solomon, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Daniel, and the other prophets. Such was the zealous and long-during care of God to preserve free from heathen admixture the dispensation of Divine life which was one day to come upon the earth.

Job knew that his Redeemer lived and would stand in the latter day on the earth. (chap. xix.) *Lived then*: was not a mere man to be borne at his appointed time. David saw that nations should serve him, and that the Lord would say to him

"Sit thou on my right hand." David saw in the Messiah the equal of God: but when we come to Isaiah, the most privileged herald of Christ, the eloquent delineator of His life and character, of His glory and His sufferings, then bursts upon us the full splendour of the dispensation. It was God Himself who, in the form of His beloved Son would descend upon earth, and work out the salvation of collective man. It was out of Zion that the law was to go forth, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. (Isaiah ii. 3.) It was not from Egypt, or Persia, or India, or Greece, that it was to come, nor out of the smallest part of it—No, on the contrary, God distinctly denounced and punished any such importation. "Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help." In the same chapter (ii. 6.) it says, "Thou hast forsaken thy people, the house of Jacob, *because they replenished from the East*, and are soothsayers like the Philistines, and they please themselves in the children of strangers." They are under the most rigorous penalties to keep themselves strictly apart in religion from the East and the children of strangers. Yet this is the very thing which *Hafed* makes the Saviour Himself do—"replenish from the East."

So severely strict was God in this system of keeping Israel entirely to His own teaching, keeping them from all admixture with the heathen, or adopting their ideas, that on this ground He completely cast out and abandoned for ever the Ten Tribes of Israel. The reason assigned for their expulsion being that they "had walked in the statutes of the heathen," "and had done as the heathen, whom the Lord cast out before them." (2 Kings xvii. 7—12.)

Such was the constant policy of the Lord to prevent His people learning anything from the Gentiles, however wise in their own wisdom. Was it likely that He would send His Son, who in some inconceivable manner is also Himself, to learn of the heathen? Can the faintest intellect believe such a thing?

When, therefore, Isaiah says, "The people that walked in darkness saw a great light," surely this was the light of the Gospel which had been so jealously kept pure from heathen contact, and no part of it could come from the Gentiles to Israel, but must flow from Israel to the Gentiles; and in what wonderful terms Isaiah then describes the Messiah: "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace; of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end." (ix. 6.)

Nothing can be at once more distinct or more amazing than this announcement of God Himself, Father and Son in mysterious

union, as the Saviour of the World. As Christ afterwards said, "He in Me and I in Him." Was it likely that God himself, the Creator of all things, the soul and source of all things—of all knowledge and wisdom—would go to His own creatures to learn how to make a new religion for the world? Still more, that He should seek this knowledge from the very sources which in all ages he had denounced and tabooed to His people as impure and abominable; for drinking at which source He had cast off ten of the twelve tribes for ever? The absurdity of such an idea is too monstrous for conception. Yet this is the very thing which *Hafed* makes God in Christ do, and Spiritualists and others accept it as gospel!!

Immediately after this text comes another. The rod which was to grow out of Jesse was to have the spirit of the Lord resting upon him: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and the fear of the Lord; and *he shall not judge after the sight of the eyes, nor after the hearing of the ears, &c.* (xi. 1, 2, 3.) Yet this again is precisely what *Hafed* makes Him do. He has to travel through the Eastern nations, and judge after the sight of the eyes, and after the hearing of the ears—*i.e.*, He who made the eyes, the ears and the mind of man, and every thought which ever passed through them, goes to hear the doctrines and opinions of heathen priests and philosophers. Can anything be imagined more absurd as applied to the Author of all things? "To Him who shall open and no man shall shut, and shut and no man shall open." (xxii. 22.) To Him "to whom the Gentiles shall seek." And here again Christ is foretold as the Lord God: "I, even I, am the Lord God, and besides Me there is no Saviour." (xliii. 11.)

But the most positive declaration that the Saviour should seek no instruction from any one, having all knowledge and power in Himself, occurs at the 10th verse of, this the 40th chapter of Isaiah, in which the Saviour is expressly spoken of, saying He shall come with a strong hand, having His reward with Him, and His work before Him: shall feed His flock like a shepherd; gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those that are with young. Then follows this remarkable passage, as if written as a direct answer to such false spirits as *Hafed*: "*Who hath directed the spirit of the Lord; or being His counsellor hath taught Him? With whom took He counsel, and who instructed Him, and taught Him knowledge, and showed to Him the way of understanding?*"

After such a Divine declaration regarding our Saviour, none but a devil would have dared to declare that He had gone in His youth, in open defiance of this prophecy, to inform Himself

at heathen, or any other sources : being Himself the source of knowledge, wisdom and truth. It was God Himself, not Gentile priests who should "put words into His mouth." (Isaiah lix. 21.)

Similar prophecies of Christ abound in the other prophets; but now let us turn to the New Testament, which describes Him as actually come. Throughout Matthew, Mark, and Luke He is spoken of as the Son of God—Son of the Most High God; but it is St. John who opens his Gospel in these words:—"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not. That was the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not." (i. 1—10.)

Now, do we believe these words? I address myself only to Christians. If we do believe them, can we possibly believe, at the same time, that the Creator of the World, who made all things, could possibly seek knowledge from the creatures of His hands? That the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world, sought light from the little twinkling tapers of Paganism? The sun of all systems going to the glowworms for light? He, who in the beginning of ages, was the Son, associate, and incomprehensible self of God; pouring forth all the light and knowledge that ever circulated through the universe; which illumined the souls and intellects of men, went in search of light amongst the doctors and teachers and priests of systems which had elevated the bull Apis and the dog Anubis into deities, with a host of other animals and reptiles? Sought intelligence from the Vishnu, the Siva, or Brahma of India, or from the fire-worshippers of Persia; from the Devs and Amschaspands of Zoroaster,—from Ormuzd or Mithra? From priests who baptized their disciples and purified new-born infants in the urine of cows? From Kong-fu-tse, or Lao-tse; or amongst the swearing and lascivious gods of Greece; and from men whom St. Paul found "in all things too superstitious?"

How little can anyone comprehend the Divine nature of Christianity, who for a moment can entertain such a grovelling idea! How little can they understand the sublime and pure, the august and jealous character of the Almighty, as taught throughout the Bible! But Jesus Christ himself—assuming all that had been predicted of Him by the prophets, and is said of Him by the Apostles—declares expressly that He is one with the Father. That He received not honour from men. (John v.

41.) But if He made men his instructors, He directly received honour from them, and confessed Himself in respect of knowledge inferior to them. A monstrous proposition! He whom the Father showed all things; and who had the same life-giving power, and who was to be honoured even as the Father. (v. 20—28.) He who declared that He and the Father were one; and who spoke what the Father commanded Him to speak. Who came from God and went to God. (xiii. 3.) Was so identical with the Father, that they who saw Him had seen the Father. Who was Himself the Way, the Truth, and the Life. (xiv. 6, 7.) Was it likely that this All-divine person must go to men, of any stamp, to learn what He already knew from the eternal and infinite fountains of truth, purity and science in Himself? Oh! the folly and blindness of men who have not read the Redeemer better than to believe such blasphemous trash from any spirits whatever!

But we might quote the whole of the Gospels and the Epistles, for they are one mountain of the light of God which can receive nothing from men. St. Paul is for ever proclaiming the full divinity and the all-sufficiency of Jesus Christ. "He is the power of God, and the wisdom of God; our wisdom, righteousness and sanctification." (1 Cor. i. 24—30.) "Our faith is not to stand in the *wisdom of man*, but in the power of God." (ii. 5.) No man knoweth the things of God but the Spirit of God. (ii. 11, 12.) And can any one imagine the Spirit of God in Christ going to men, however wise, to learn what God was teaching in every moment of their intermingling life? Paul and the other Apostles even did not speak the words of man's wisdom, but were taught by the Holy Ghost. (1 Cor. ii. 13.) They "drew" from the rock Christ who followed the patriarchs. (1 Cor. x. 4.) And this rock Christ, which had followed and strengthened the patriarchs, was He to draw his power, His soul-sustenance from pagan priests? The whole is a series of absurdities. But in the 1st chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians, Paul bursts out energetically at the idea of some such blasphemous folly. "But, though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we have said, so I say again, If any man preach any other Gospel unto you, let him be accursed." (i. 8—9.) Yet this *Hafed* preaches a very different Gospel from that which the Apostles preached. For *Hafed*, according to the Rev. Henry Browning, preaches that Christ is a mere man, who may be prayed to as the human medium betwixt God and us. *Hafed*, therefore, falls under the indignant anathema of Paul. He falls under that of the Book of Revelation. In this, the only book of the revelation of the

future of the Church of Christ, it is declared that, "if any man shall add anything unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in the book." Both as to doctrine and revelation the New Testament has limited our faith to what is there delivered and settled by Christ and his immediate Apostles. This was manifestly done to keep the faith pure, as Christ left it, and to shut the door against the "lo! here's," and "lo! there's," against those deceivers whom our Saviour assured us were certain to come. Yet *Hafed* has given a host of new revelations; engrafting on the Gospel history whole chapters in the life of Christ, of which neither the Gospels, nor history, Christian, Hebrew, or Gentile, knows anything, and which are in open hostility, as I have here amply shown, to the whole system of God through the whole of the Bible narrative and ordinances.

With St. Paul, Christ is above all principalities and powers. (Ephesians i. 21.) Imagine Him going, in His divine altitude and fulness of knowledge, to gather the poor glimmerings of science lodged in men whose gathered light was still mingled with gross darkness. Omniscience at the feet of mortal scientists! The sun endeavouring to illumine itself at the twinkle of a star! "Christ is the fulness of Him who filleth all in all." (Ephesians i. 23.) Imagine Him seeking to the emptiness of Indian priests, Greek sophists, and Egyptian hierophants! "The mystery of Christ," says Paul, "was not made known in other ages unto the sons of men as it is now revealed unto His holy Apostles," and prophets by the Spirit. (Ephesians iii. 4—5.) It was a mystery utterly unknown to the wisest heathen, "which from the beginning of the world had been hidden in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ." (Ephesians iii. 9.) As the wisest heathen, therefore, knew nothing of it, in the youth of Christ, it was impossible that he could learn it, or any part of it, from them. It was a Divine secret existing in the bosom of the Father, and communicated to the Son, its destined Promulgator to the world, directly and in its fulness by the Spirit.

Again, in his Epistle to the Colossians, Paul repeats his assertion that Christ was the Creator of all things; all things in Him, in all fulness. The mystery hid from the ages, and manifested only to the saints (Colossians i., 26), and by whom this mystery was to be made known among the Gentiles (27). Christ not only created all things, and therefore would have perfect knowledge of all things; but "is before all things, who is the beginning, that *in all things* He might have pre-eminence." (Colossians i., 16, 17, 18.) "For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell." (19).



Do the admirers of *Hafed* understand these declarations? That this mystery was first manifested by Christ unto the saints, not learned by Christ from Eastern sages? That in Him was all fulness, and no little vacuum left even to poke in the dogmas of Magi and Bonzes? Can fulness be more than full? Could Christ learn His saving love from men from whom we are assured by the Apostle that it had been expressly hidden, that Christ "in all things might have the pre-eminence?" Again, he tells you, in the Epistle to the Thessalonians that the Gospel "is not the word of men, but is in truth the Word of God." (ii. 13.)

John, in his Epistle, repeats his declaration that Christ is the Word and the Light of the World, "and that they who have the anointing of His Spirit need not that any man teach them." If this be true of the Apostles, how much more of Christ Himself? Finally, in the Book of Revelation Jesus Himself says, "I am the Alpha and the Omega; the beginning and the end, says the Lord, which is, and was, and which is to come, the Almighty." (i. 8.) Could the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the Almighty, have need to study under pagan priests? The doctrine is essentially a doctrine of devils, tacitly denying the Godhead of Christ, and seeking to degrade that glorious Gospel of our salvation. To be capable of believing such a thing we must reduce our intellect to a condition of imbecility more prostrate than that to which Popery reduces its wretched votaries.

Thus we have traversed the whole field of sacred history, prophecy and evangelization, and we find these bearing one luminous and continuous evidence to the divinity of Jesus Christ: to the fact that the Gospel should come, and did come, solely from Him direct from heaven; had no aid or inspiration from man; had nothing in it of man's wisdom, but was the gift and wisdom alone of God. It was a mystery sacredly and jealously kept from the knowledge of all men, not merely of pagans but of the chosen people, to be revealed at the first time by Jesus Christ, to the Jews first and then to the Gentiles. This mystery dwelt in the fulness of Christ as Creator and Upholder of all things, and derived and could derive nothing from human sources. The assurance of these facts is made from age to age, from prophet to prophet. It is repeated and impressed on the sacred records for ages. It was reiterated line upon line, precept upon precept. Never was the proclamation of a great and marvellous mystery so elaborated, so confirmed by accumulative testimony; so made an imperishable, ineradicable portion of the national history and literature of a people. It was intended to be made so plain, to be engraven in such deep and determined characters in the human mind for all coming

time, that there should not possibly be any mistake about a fact of so much importance to the human race; namely, that the Christian religion is a religion wholly, solely, purely and perfectly a revelation from heaven and from God. A religion in which man had no hand whatever, and could have none but as a crime and a blasphemy. Yet of this great truth, regarding which its Divine Giver had taken so much pains to prevent any mistake, there are those it seems, even now, who can and do make gross misconception, and in the face of a mass of evidence, bright as the sun, can believe a false spirit that it was taught to the Lord of all by Eastern hierophants, Magi and Bonzes!

They forget that this was to be entirely "a new thing," not a thing to be compounded from the dreams and reveries of men who were but the leaders of the heathen. Isaiah said: "Behold the former things are come to pass, and new things do I declare." (Isaiah xlii. 9) And Jeremiah reports the announcement: "God hath created a new thing on the earth." (xxxii. 22.) It was not to be a cobbling up of old systems or dogmas; an *olla podrida* compounded from pagan theologies and mythologies, but a descent of the very law and life of heaven, embodying in it all the power, wisdom, and beneficence of the Godhead.

That it could be anything else was a moral impossibility. Pagan priests could not communicate what they had not; and for Christ to have gone out to them, to learn from them would have been in violent and flagrant hostility to the whole Divine system, as exhibited in the Hebrew Scriptures. It would make Christ Himself, the incarnate God, at war with Himself and His Father. Utterly inconsistent with Himself and His mission. Christ, "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

If it be impossible as a moral fact, it is equally so as an historical one. Not being a moral fact, it could not be an historical fact. Therefore, there is no trace of such a fact in the whole history of Christ, written by His intimate friends, by His inspired followers, and witnesses of the whole Messianic career. No trace! There is not the most distant whisper of it. Had so important a portion of our Lord's youthful life, as His extensive foreign travels in quest of intelligence, been a fact, could it possibly have remained unknown? Could these inspired Evangelists have been so unfurnished, so unqualified for their great task of presenting to all aftertimes the life and teachings of the Saviour, as to have known nothing of it? Would our Lord, in His daily and familiar converse with His disciples for three years, never have whispered a word of these travels and tuition? Why? If they were essential to His preparation for His ministry, there could be no reason to conceal

them. Could all this have escaped the learned Luke, and the still more learned, restless, active and acute Paul? Could it have escaped His neighbours, who declared that "He had never been taught?" Could it have escaped His mortal enemies, the Jews, who sought with avidity for anything to accuse Him of? And what cause of accusation there would have been here!

Those who suppose the theory of *Hafed* feasible, totally forget that it was next to impossible for the Jews to travel, at least as isolated individuals. They were a people so environed by barriers of rites, restrictions, and duties, which God had purposely laid upon them to keep them, as the custodians of the great coming truth, from the follies and superstitions of the Gentiles, that solitary individuals could not possibly travel into far countries without continual contamination. Jews might exist in forced exile in communities, or they might exist as trading companies, in which they could carry along with them their national and religious institutions; but a single individual would find himself in a perpetual state of defilement from contact with interdicted persons and things amongst the heathen. Jesus Christ, as a youth, and especially as travelling with an Egyptian priest, would find it utterly impossible to avoid daily violation of the laws of Moses, amongst uncircumcised Gentiles. He must partake their food, be constantly compromised by their customs, their idolatrous worships, and their uncleannesses, and on His return His rigid countrymen would have stoned Him as a vile renegade and violator of the sacred Mosaic system. Witness the horror with which the Jews saw Jesus enter the house and eat with the publicans of the Romans even. Witness the horror of the disciples at hearing of Peter mixing with the Gentiles. Hear Peter's own words to Cornelius: "Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation." (Acts x. 28.)

On these grounds we must dismiss *Hafed* as a sheer and impossible fiction. That breaking down of the partition wall betwixt Jew and Gentile, was not taken place till Christ had proclaimed the liberty of the Gospel to the Jews, and had been rejected by them. Christ came to fulfil the law, not to destroy it. It was the Jews who rejected the Lawgiver himself, and in that annihilated the ceremonial law. He intimated this to the woman of Canaan who entreated Him to cure her daughter: "I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (xv. 24). Not till after their rejection of the Gospel did He send His disciples to preach to all nations. And Paul did the same. When the Jews in Rome refused the Gospel, he said,

"Be it known unto you that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles." (Acts xxviii. 28).

On all these accounts we pronounce *Hafed* a fiction—and a fiction of which the direct effect, and no doubt the intention, is to undermine the divine fabric of the Gospel. The Jews themselves—who raked up all possible lies to degrade Christ—never invented a more palpable fiction in their *Toldath Jeschu*. It is exactly one of those things which Christ foretold: "Many shall come in My name, and shall deceive many." It is probably but the beginning of these "many" in connection with Spiritualism. The Roman Church has opened the door of TRADITION, and through it a legion of evils have rushed forth into their Church. The Church has never defined the limits of tradition. They have resisted all calls upon it to declare what are the actual traditions of the apostolic times. Tradition is anything that the rulers of the Church may adopt and produce for their own purposes. Dr. Newman calls this practice of the Roman Church of establishing new dogmas, "development." The Jesuits, whose leader and great authority is Don Alphonso Liguori, have promulgated the theory of a new era of the Church, commencing with the Council of Trent, in which Christ confides to His Church new secrets; and have hence issued the novelties of the apparition of the Madonna: the crowning her as Queen of Heaven: the installing her as the third person of the Trinity. Hence pilgrimages, and visions, and, in fact, whatever the Jesuits think will help to prop up the falling fabric. And all this in defiance of the Scripture prohibition of new revelations!

Are we to open a similar door to the hosts of nameless or unguaranteed spirits who swarm on the borders of the inner world? If we do, it will be at more terrible moral cost than that which the Roman Church has had to suffer from tradition. It will probably prove the most awful curse which has befallen Christianity and the world. If new histories are to be grafted on the authentic histories of the inspired Evangelist, Satan will have achieved his proudest triumph. Christianity will soon sink beneath the deadly but fair-looking lianas of the spiritual tropics, and perish in the tangled mass of diabolic fable. Shall this be? No! We must take our stand with the great Chillingworth; and declare that "the religion of Protestants is the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible!"

In every age in which a new and great truth has been developed, the devil has pursued and surrounded it with his forces. The early Christians had to endure Manichaeans, Nicolaitans, Gnostics, and the like—the Middle Ages abounded with dancers, flagellists, possessed witches. With the Reformation the evil

broke out with new violence. Luther, who translated the Bible and set the Gospel free, found himself overwhelmed by the wild claims of the Twickau prophets, by professors who bade the parents of their pupils call them home, for all education was superfluous, having the tuition of the spirit. The peasantry hearing the doctrine of the free Gospel, rose on their masters, and denounced the great Reformer as a traitor, because he did not aid them in cutting their masters' throats. And now we are called on by the spirits to receive new Gospels, and new lives of Christ. What next? Clearly there is no safety for us but in taking our stand firmly, irremovably on the authentic Scriptures, which have all the authority of historic truth, and are stamped with the consentient sanction of the greatest minds of all succeeding ages.

We are all liable to error. Let us not anger or accuse one another; but look seriously at the dangers that menace us. Whatever the spirits may tell us, reply with Chillingworth, Our religion is the Bible, the whole Bible, and NOTHING BUT THE BIBLE. Seeing that it contains everything capable of making "the man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Tim., iii. 16, 17.)

NOTE.—I have not in this article alluded to the gross plagiarisms, both of pictures and facts, by *Hafed* noticed by other writers, nor the equally gross historical errors and falsehoods referred to by a clergyman. If false in so many ways, what confidence can be put in this spirit in any? Our friend Mr. Hall seems grieved lest the medium should be thought false. I don't take it to be a case of medium but of spirit. They are the lying spirits—who are legion—who are at the bottom of all the alarming scandals now laying waste Spiritualism. The mediums are but the spouts through which these feculent fluids are discharged on the public; but if the spouts are not better looked after, they will have to be cleared away too.

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## A STORY OF QUAKER SPIRITUALISM.

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The spirit-world around this world of sense  
 Floats like an atmosphere, and everywhere  
 Wafts through these earthly mists and vapours dense  
 A vital breath of more etherial air. . . .  
 And as the moon from some dark gate of cloud  
 Throws o'er the sea a floating bridge of light,  
 Across whose trembling planks our fancies crowd  
 Into the realm of mystery and night,—  
 So, from the world of spirits, there descends  
 A bridge of light connecting it with this,  
 O'er whose unsteady floor, that sways and bends,  
 Wander our thoughts above the dark abyss.—*Longfellow.*

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In the autumn of the year 1666 the great Fire of London occurred, and with this disaster the Society of Friends (in scorn called Quakers) is intimately connected. Beginning in a well-timbered bakehouse, that fire—under the impulsion of a fearful storm—spread across a district in which much pitch, tar, rosin, and other combustibles were warehoused. The thatched roofs of the neighbouring dwellings furnished materials for continuing the conflagration; and the buildings themselves, having much wood in their structure, and being dry from an exceedingly hot summer, favoured the devastating power. For three days wind and fire held unhindered riot, flinging and scattering brands in all directions—"the nights more terrible than the days, and the light," says an old chronicler, "the same, the light of the fire supplying that of the sun—while, as if to make disaster complete, the pipes from the New River were found to be empty, and the machine which raised water from the Thames was burnt to ashes.

From the Tower to Temple Bar the whole district was, at length, one surging mass of flame and smoke, and the wearied people had to make the meadows outside the City their home for a time. Here, as Dryden, the favourite poet of the period, tells us:—

The most in fields like herded beasts lie down,  
 To dews obnoxious on the grassy floor;  
 And while their babes in sleep their sorrows drown,  
 Sad parents watch the remnants of their store:  
 While, by the motion of the flames, they guess  
 What streets are burning now and what are near,  
 An infant, waking, to the paps would press,  
 And meets, instead of milk, a falling tear.

According to Clarendon, above two-thirds of the great City—and those the most wealthy parts—were all burnt, without one house remaining. Eighty-nine churches and thirteen thousand two hundred houses were destroyed!

Two days before the conflagration, a Huntingdonshire Quaker, Thomas Ibbott by name, came up to London in great haste. He alighted from his horse, and with clothes loose, ran through the City to Whitehall. In running his posture was that of such as should flee from the fire soon to begin;—they were to have no time to fasten on their garments properly. As “a Sign” of the impending disaster and its victims, Ibbott declared he had been shown in a vision that the City would be laid waste by the conflagration now soon to commence.

“I saw him not until the morning of the day the fire broke out,” writes the noble Quaker, George Whitehead, “but the evening after he had passed through the City I met with some of our women Friends at the ‘Bull-and-Mouth’ [the Quaker Chapel], who gave me a pretty full account of him;—how he had been with them that day, and had told them his Vision of the Fire, and his message to London. To them he appeared very hot and zealous in spirit; and they were afraid he was under some discomposure of mind, which made them somewhat question what he told them; but when they related the same to me I had a fear and caution upon my spirit, so as I durst not question his vision or message. I said I knew the man;—that he was of a hot spirit, so that his spirit is nearer to those destroying angels—or fiery spirits—that are ministers of wrath and severe judgments, than those Friends are who have attained to a farther growth in the spirit of the Lamb Christ Jesus; and that Ibbott might sooner have a discovery of such an evil judgment, or mishap permitted to come upon the City, than they whose spirits are more weak and gentle,—more settled in quietness and peace. I very well remember this was the import and effect of my answer.”\*

Does not this mysterious affair support the theory of two distinct spheres of existence—a causal world and a world of effects—a spirit-world and a natural world, separated from one another by a discreet degree yet both human?

Continuing his narration Whitehead writes: “The morning the fire broke out, some of us met at [Quaker] Gerard Roberts’ house, where Ibbott met us and told us he must go to the King [Charles II.], with a message to warn him to release our Friends out of prisons, or else the decree of the Lord would be sealed against him in three days’ time, to his destruction or overthrow. I was afraid he would be too forward and earnestly charged him, if he went, not to limit a time, etc., for he might cause truth to suffer if he did. . . . Also I did observe in a letter of his a few days before the Fire was over, he mentioned the true

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\* See George Whitehead’s *Autobiography* under date 1666.

number of days when the Vision of Fire should be accomplished; so that he had a certain vision and discovery given him."

The Father of Quakerism, George Fox, came up to London shortly after this event, and Ibbott's adventure would be sure to furnish him with matter for serious reflection. He would see that the Society of Friends had only by the lightest accident escaped the suspicion of having caused that fire. Evidently there had been a moment when another word, or gesture even, would have turned the thoughts of the populace from the smouldering ruins to the Quakers, and in the temper the people were then in, the "Flock of the Companions," as the Friends sometimes called themselves, might have been massacred throughout the city. George Fox muses over the matter at some length in his "Journal," and, on account of the similarity of Ibbott's case to the well-attested vision Swedenborg is related to have had of the Stockholm fire we will conclude with a few of his statements, merely premising that at the time of these events there were fully a thousand Quakers in the jails of England, and no inconsiderable number on their way to the West Indies—transported convicts, doomed to work side by side with slaves and the basest kind of felons—so heinous was the faith that would trust God for the next word, would maintain His sufficiency, and the universal saving Light of His indwelling spirit! Truly a sad time for the children of the Light!

"The very next day after my release [from Scarborough Castle] the fire broke out in London, and the report of it came quickly down into the country. Then I saw the Lord God was true and just in His word which He had showed me before in Lancaster Gaol, when I saw the Angel of the Lord with a glittering drawn sword southward. . . . The people of London were forewarned of this fire, yet few laid it to heart or believed it, but rather grew more wicked and higher in pride: for a Friend was moved to come out of Huntingdonshire a little before the fire and [was seen] to scatter his money up and down the streets, to turn his horse loose in the streets, to untie the knees of his breeches and let his stockings fall down, and to unbutton his doublet and tell the people 'so shall they run up and down, scattering their money and their goods, half undressed, like mad people, as he was a *sign* to them;' and *so they did when the city was burning*. . . I came to London; but I was so weak with lying almost three years in cruel and hard imprisonments, my joints and my body were so stiff and benumbed, that I could hardly get on my horse or bend my joints; nor could I well bear to be near the fire or to eat warm meat, I had been kept so long from it. Being come to London I walked a little among the ruins and took good notice of them. I saw the city lying



according as the word of the Lord came to me concerning it several years before."

*How* such a vision could really occur is not so difficult of explanation, if we take into account the fact of man's duality; that while his body is in this natural world and subject to spatial limitations his mind is in the spiritual world, where effects are seen in their causes and where time and space are mere conditions of state. It is said of the inhabitants of the latter world, that all the thoughts of each man flow forth in every direction, and diffuse themselves in some spiritual society much as the rays of light are diffused from flame (*Swedenborg, Ath. Cr. ii. 74*); but that for such a state to be realised by a man still on this side the grave, intense abstraction is needed. This is the very quality Ibbott and the Friends possessed in an eminent degree. In a time of deep interioration our Quaker's inner mind was enabled to discern effects in their causes. In imagery and in thought it was dimly revealed to him that the English Sodom of those Restoration-days was even then drawing upon itself an overwhelming flood of infernal influences whose devastating nature could turn Paradise itself into a desert. That London had become maddened with sensuality in a degree never equalled before nor since may be gathered from the novelists and comic dramatists of the time, as Milton's Quaker friend, Thomas Ellwood writes:—

'Twas wonderful to see in what a trice  
This zealous nation was o'errun with vice.  
As when the boiling gulf, with furious gales  
Puffed up, o'erflows its banks and drowns the vales;  
And when again it ebbs, it leaves, we find,  
A loathsome scum, a noisome stink behind.

Among the pictures in his *Speculum Seculi* is this:—

Nor are they with their baubles satisfied,  
But sex distinctions too are laid aside.  
The women wear the trousers and the vest,  
While men in muffs, fans, petticoats are dressed.  
Some women—oh! the shame—like ramping rigs,  
Ride flaunting in their powdered periwigs;  
Astride they sit, and not ashamed neither!  
Dressed up like men, in jacket, cap and feather.  
All things to lust and wantonness are fitted,  
Nothing that tends to vanity omitted.

Extraordinary visitations, as a complement and retribution of wickedness so extraordinary, are quite in keeping with the teachings of history and the monition which has reached us across twenty-five centuries: "Behold all ye that kindle a fire,—that compass *yourselves* about with sparks . . . ; this ye shall have of mine hand; ye shall lie down in sorrow." (Isaiah l. 11.) By God's will evil punishes itself.

RICHARD McCULLY.

## A DEBATE IN NEWCASTLE.

NEWCASTLE is a town full of ancient and picturesque associations, but they exist in strange contrast with the hard and unpoetic appearances which are the usual concomitants of a great centre of industry. The grand old Norman Keep, built by Robert Curthose, and often besieged by marauding Scots, is flanked on one side by an Assize Court, and on the other by a railway. Looking down from the great square tower you may perceive an ugly iron structure in course of erection on the site of a bridge which Hadrian built, and a little to the right and still nearer to the spectator, there is one of our proudest monuments of engineering skill, the "High Level Bridge," of Robert Stephenson. In its normal state the town is dull and dirty. There are some noble streets and two or three fine public buildings, but there is always a thick and almost impenetrable curtain of smoke on three sides of the place; on the other there is the fine moor presented to the town by some old king or other, who ought to have the thanks of all modern Novocastrians for the free, open space which his charter has preserved. The moor, indeed, is a noble expanse of rolling greensward. It is open on one side to the winds blowing from the North Sea, and on the other to the breezes which, coming across moor and fell, have swept over the crested billows of the Atlantic. Newcastle has a certain likeness to its people. On three sides they are hard, exclusive, and unsympathetic; on the other they are tolerably warm, hospitable, and genial. But you have invariably to travel round the three cold sides before you get to the one warm one. People speak of the "rugged virtues" of these northern folks, and they are very rugged indeed.

For the most part the people of the North of England are as deficient in education as in refinement; and yet they are noted for a species of rough intelligence, which in ordinary concerns often makes them more than a match for persons who are both educated and refined. I have heard Professor Tyndall's Belfast speech discussed intelligently and with understanding in a one-roomed cottage in a Northumberland pit village. It had been read first of all in a newspaper, and then talked over among the more intelligent of the pitmen, every one bringing his quota of thought, and adding to the general stock of enlightenment. The working population of the North is distinguished by great breadth of opinion. The reader will, of course, understand that by breadth I do not necessarily mean depth or soundness. Of late years there has been a very general revolt against authority,

and the feeling in favour of religion has been shaken as well as other feelings which had less in their favour. There is, amongst the pitmen especially, a very wide leaning towards Secularism. Mr. Bradlaugh is one of the favourite speakers at the miner's annual picnics; and he never visits the North without getting large audiences who listen to him with something very like enthusiasm. For all this, I believe there are very few pitmen who would really avow themselves Secularists. Many of them would probably speak of themselves as men of uncertain opinions: they are neither quite off with the old love nor quite on with the new. They like men who can "speak," and they like that kind of speaking which has an appearance of breadth and freedom in it. One must confess, indeed, that they have a very considerable weakness for clap-trap.

It must appear as if I were going a great deal out of my way to describe a debate at Newcastle. It was necessary to speak of these things, however, and especially of the pitmen, because anyone "with half an eye" might have seen in the audience which listened to Mr. Charles Watts and Dr. Sexton for four nights at the beginning of last month, a very large preponderance of the working-class element of the North. "Geordie" had come in great force. Everywhere, dotted about the semi-circular seats of the Newcastle Lecture Hall, might be seen the hardy frame and the attentive face of the Northern pitman. "Geordie" is always ready for excitement. A game at "bowls," a day's rabbit coursing, a run for the Northumberland Plate, or a speech on political questions, interests him almost equally. A debate on such topics as Christianity and Secularism promised excitement of an unusual kind. Pitmen dropped in from all the surrounding villages, and the two opponents found crowded audiences every night to listen to, or to cheer them, and not uninclined to give an occasional hiss.

Mr. Charles Watts was a person certain to be regarded with some favour by such audiences as assembled at the Newcastle Lecture Hall. He has a fine physique, a loud voice, and a declamatory style. He does not reason too closely; is not averse to claptrap, and likes to say hard things about his opponents. Dr. Sexton is much quieter as a debater, as most persons who read this article will know. He is apt to place more reliance in fact and argument than on loudness or reiteration, and he is more inclined to humour than abuse. Nevertheless, I observed that although Mr. Watts had by far the greater portion of sympathy with him on the first evening, his influence steadily declined during the debate, whilst his opponent improved the hold which he only gradually obtained. The first night's discussion was opened by Mr. Watts, who

undertook to show that Secularism was sufficient for the well-being of mankind. I heard his opening statement, and a portion of Dr. Sexton's reply. Mr. Watts's definition of Secularism struck me as a little singular. I have heard him lecture a great deal at different times, but I never heard him speak of Secularism in a manner at all corresponding to that in which he spoke of it at Newcastle. There is almost as great a contrast between Mr. Watts as a lecturer and Mr. Watts as a debater as there is between Secularism in theory and Secularism in practice. It was almost impossible to take exception to his delineation of his pet system, it was so very finely drawn. Dr. Sexton, however, very wisely, as I thought, refused to be bound by definitions which defined nothing. In a case of speculative *doppelganger* it is better to get at the real body of opinion than at the mere hollow and simulative body. And so Dr. Sexton combated the Secularism that he knew, and not that species of it which he had probably just heard of for the first time. I do not wish to be understood as accusing Mr. Watts of any concealment or want of honesty, but I think he is inclined to be a little more guarded in statement when debating before an audience which he does not know, than he is before an audience with whose feeling he is perfectly acquainted. One began to think, while listening to his speech, that Secularism had a sort of copyright in science, and that its morality was entered at Stationers' Hall. You might have imagined that it was the habit of a Secularist to carry all the sources of scientific knowledge in his hat, and the solar system in his waistcoat pocket. Equally, you might have thought that a Secularist was so very moral a person that he couldn't sneeze for fear of infringing some imaginary moral law. It was a little surprising after this, to hear Mr. Watts ask Dr. Sexton whether he really thought that a Secularist could be a moral man. It was still more surprising to hear him admit during the second night's debate, that morality had no absolute existence, but might, and indeed did, change from age to age, just like the fashions in hats and periwigs.

Dr. Sexton opened the debate on the second evening, and he showed that so far as science was concerned, neither Christians nor Secularists had an exclusive right to it; that so far as morality was concerned, that also was a thing independent of speculative opinion; and that so far as intelligible system was concerned, Secularism was a mere chaos of contradictions. Incidentally, he showed how much the professions of Secularists were in excess of their performances. They had done nothing in science; they had made no new discoveries in morality; and as to practical work, they had not established a single Sunday School, nor hit on any organised method of improving the con-

dition of the people. I think the most partial person would scarcely have called Mr. Watts's reply conclusive; and it was sometimes bitterly personal. For instance, he accused his opponent of teaching Secularism when he did not believe in, or at any rate, understand it. Then he went further than this, and accused Dr. Sexton of using every means to become the President of the Secular Society—an accusation which called forth a reply from the Doctor, and such a storm of disapprobation from the audience as made Mr. Watts for some time inaudible. Yet he displayed much dexterity in avoiding difficulties, and showed that, however deficient he may be as a reasoner, he is undoubtedly an effective debater.

I was present during the whole of the second night's discussion, but only for about an hour on each of the two concluding evenings. On Monday, the 10th of April, I was riding up from North Shields to Newcastle, and I found myself in company with two men who occupied almost the whole of the journey in discussing the debate. Their knowledge of such matters dated back to a remote period, and they spoke quite familiarly of the debate between "Joe Barker" and Dr. Cooke. Then came a comparison of Dr. Sexton and Mr. Watts with these debaters of a former day, and some references to most of the gentlemen who have debated in the North of England since. The impression of these men seemed to be that Mr. Watts was "a canny speaker," but that he was unequally matched against Dr. Sexton. This seemed to be the impression of a large portion of the four nights' audience, although it is only fair to state that a number of persons were of opinion that Mr. Watts came off victorious. "He's 'nihilated him the neet," one man exclaimed repeatedly, as he left the room after the third night's discussion. My own opinion was the reverse of this. The speech which was supposed to have "'nihilated" Dr. Sexton was a loud and violent declamation on the persecutions of Christianity. It did not so much as touch on anything which had gone before; but it was the last speech of the evening, and it gave Mr. Watts an opportunity of doing what is vulgarly known as "launching out." Violent declamation must always be effective in debate, but one would suppose that a person with Mr. Watts's opinions would avoid it. He has such a lordly contempt of the emotions, and is addicted to such an idolising estimate of the majesty and power of the intellect! One would suppose, if one could judge his opinions apart from the manner in which they are expressed, that a Christian is *all* emotion, and a Secularist *all* intelligence. Yet Mr. Watts is nothing if he is not emotional, and he never maintains merely the average coolness for a space of two minutes and a half. At the beginning of the speech of which I am now writing, he

unctuously expressed pity for Dr. Sexton. He did not think that he had fallen so low as to prostrate his heart and his intellect before the idol of a mere superstition. Here was a pretty thing to be said by a gentleman who was continually professing a warm attachment to his opponent! Why does Mr. Watts so infelicitously copy the manner of Mr. Job Trotter? There is a sense of fairness in a Newcastle audience, and people here don't care for Job Trotterisms. They laughed ironically at Mr. Watts when he began speaking in this style, and I observed that he was much less personal afterwards.

I find it very difficult to leave Mr. Watts's peculiarities. In speaking of the persecutions of opposing Christian sects, he said that they were the legacy left by the "unique Jesus." I heard him make use of this same phrase at Manchester some years ago, and I thought it was very happy at the time. But a good thing stales with repetition, and Mr. Watts repeated this phrase so often, that I was irresistibly reminded of a story which Oliver Wendell Holmes tells about a lecturer who went out to tea. The lady of the house spoke to him about his perpetual wanderings from place to place, and in reply, he compared himself to the Huma, a bird remarkable for its travelling propensities. Years afterwards the lecturer went to the same house, the same speech was made about his travels from place to place, and it evoked precisely the same comparison.

During the last evening of the debate the discussion turned very much on the moral teachings of Christianity. When I entered the room Mr. Watts was quoting from Gregory and Smith—two of his favourite authors, by the way, for we had Gregory and then Smith, Smith and then Gregory, every evening, *ad lib.* He seemed to have grown weary of the discussion: a man close to my elbow said that he was "used up," for he concluded his speech before he had exhausted his time, and Dr. Sexton had to complain that he had given him nothing to which to reply. There had, however, in a previous part of the debate been some references to Confucius and the philosophers of Greece and Rome. Mr. Watts had contended that Christ made no new discoveries in morals, and that all his distinctive teachings might be found in the works of philosophers who had preceded him. He even went so far as to assert that the moral doctrines of Christianity were the same as those of the Essenes, and he seemed to be ignorant of the fact that there is very strong reason to suppose that the Essenes were merely secret societies of early Christians. Dr. Sexton, I think, knows a great deal more about the heathen philosophers than Mr. Watts, and he quoted from Homer, Hesiod, and succeeding poets and philosophers, to show what the moral teachings of these people really were.

The exposition was very damaging to Mr. Watts's side of the argument, and because it did not admit of a reply, he declared it to be unfair. His last speech was an address to the audience, and had very little to do with the matter in dispute. It was, in fact, an appeal to those emotions which Mr. Watts so curiously despises. A great deal of it was very manly in tone, though the effect of the manliness was spoiled by an affectation of pity for his opponent. Mr. Watts said he did not wish any person in the audience to espouse one side or the other because of what had been said in the debate; he wished to make them think for themselves. In the end, of course, they would come to his own very reasonable way of thinking. He re-affirmed his friendly sentiments towards Dr. Sexton, and only regretted that he did not see out of his (Mr. Watts's) eyes. This ingenuous assumption of superior intelligence also called forth an ironical laugh from the audience; but Mr. Watts sat down amidst a very hearty round of applause. Dr. Sexton concluded the debate by a speech, in which he referred to several unsettled points, and reciprocated Mr. Watts's friendly sentiments. He was repeatedly applauded throughout, and when he concluded he was vociferously cheered.

The audience seemed to be perfectly satisfied with the course which the debate had taken, but it appeared to have made no change in the sentiments of those who were present. Dr. Sexton was so heartily received in Newcastle, that he will no doubt be encouraged to pay it another visit before any long time has elapsed.

AARON WATSON.

### ON THE DECEASE OF A DEAR GRANDCHILD.

*September, 1874. Aged six months.*

*Being the third son; the former two having had a much briefer span of earth-life.*

Too fragile for earth, he has fled!  
O say not, "the loved one is dead:"  
He has gone to the light.  
In earth's murky shadows immured  
He six months, all patient, endured,  
Ere taking his flight.

Friends lovingly sought to detain  
Their darling below, but in vain;  
Say not they were wrong:  
But beckoning angels, all fair,  
And two of his brothers o'er there—  
Attractions so strong—

O'ercoming the trammels of earth,  
Have led to his heavenly birth  
In the land of the blest.  
No pain, grief, or sickness can now  
O'ershadow his infantile brow,  
Where he is at rest.

Let's think of the measureless bliss  
And unalloyed joys that are his,  
In yon happy spheres;  
Then shall we rejoice at his gain,  
And, ceasing from sorrow and pain,  
Dry up our fond tears.

E. S.

## OCCASIONAL LEAVES FROM MY NOTE BOOK.

THE greater part of my time since the last chapter of these Notes appeared has been spent away from home. I have had a three week's lecturing tour in the Provinces, which involved a considerable amount of travelling, and the delivery of a larger number of lectures than is usually crowded into that short space of time. The details connected with some of these will, I have no doubt, prove interesting. Before leaving home, however, in addition to my usual Sunday Services, I gave two lectures on Spiritualism in the neighbourhood of London, one at Brixton, on the 16th of March, and the other at Finchley on the 20th. The first of these was given under the auspices of the Brixton Psychological Society, and was on the "Philosophy of Spiritualism, with Criticism of Adverse Theories invented to account for the Phenomena," and the other was mainly brought about by the active exertions of Mr. Everitt and Mr. Dawson Rogers, both of whom reside in the neighbourhood, and was entitled "Where are the Dead? Is it possible to hold Converse with the Departed?" Both lectures were tolerably well attended and created a great amount of interest. Especially was this the case with the latter one, a large audience having assembled, all of whom appeared much interested in what I had to say. As this was the first lecture on the subject of Spiritualism that had ever been given in the neighbourhood, it promises well for the future, and I have no doubt that a second lecture would prove even more attractive than the last, as the interest of the people is now fairly excited in this great question.

On Friday, March 31st, I left London by the Midland train for Derby, where I had been announced to lecture that evening on "How I became converted from Scepticism to Spiritualism." On reaching my destination I found that a considerable amount of interest was being felt in the subject, and that there was every prospect of a very successful meeting. I made my way to Mr. Adshead's, in Victoria Street, and here met Mr. and Mrs. Vernon, of Fole Mills, and some other friends. The chair had been announced to be taken by the Rev. C. Badland, M.A., the Unitarian minister of the town. This gentleman I also met at tea at Mr. Adshead's; and I spent with him pleasant afternoon in conversing upon various topics of interest. I learned from Mr. Adshead that amongst the numerous persons who had applied for tickets for the evening lecture was the proprietor of a ladies' school, who was desirous of securing admission for the whole of her pupils. I think this circumstance is quite new in the experience of lecturers on Spiritualism. I may remark that



the lady and her pupils not only attended the lecture but paid the greatest possible attention to all that I had to say. The Masonic Hall had been secured for the occasion, and it was well filled. The Chairman made a few introductory remarks, and took the opportunity of stating that he was not a Spiritualist, but had taken the chair on that occasion as a matter of duty. I said I hoped to convert him before I had done, but whether I did or not of course I am not able to say. The lecture was considered by the Derby friends a splendid success, and every one, I believe, was highly gratified. At the close an opportunity was allowed for questions, but with the exception of one gentleman, who rambled on at some length about the prohibitions of the Mosaic law, no opposition was forthcoming. The *Derby Mercury*, speaking of this and the following lecture, remarked:—

The lecturer—who was for some years a well-known Secularist teacher—is, whatever else, a capital logician, and the catena of his arguments left little to be desired in the way of ratiocination.

On the following day, Saturday, I made my way to Uttoxeter, to hold the debate with Mr. Lakin, which had been previously announced. I had been once before at Uttoxeter; but on that occasion, as on this, I did not see much of the place. It is a fine old town, surrounded by magnificent scenery, and interesting mainly to literary men in connection with the self-imposed penance which Dr. Johnson did in its market place, and as being the Woodleighton portrayed so admirably by Mrs. Howitt. Uttoxeter is, in fact, generally believed to have been the birth-place of Mrs. Howitt, and the old house in which she is said to have been born—incorrectly, I believe, but in which she certainly spent her childhood—is still standing, and forms a feature of interest to the traveller. Of course I did not leave the town upon the occasion of my first visit without going to look at this building, nor could I refrain now from gazing at it again. The name of Uttoxeter is one, the true derivation of which has never been very clearly made out. There are several theories extant in regard to it, all of which are probably incorrect. It is written Uttoxeshather, Uttokcester, Utcester, Ulcester, and Uttoxeter. It is supposed by some to be the Wotocheshede of Doomsday Book, which they imagine to be derived from *Wudu* (wood) and *Seade* (shade), but there is little evidence that this is correct. Leland, Camden, and Hollinshead give its Saxon name as Uttok-cester, the termination of which is, of course, derived from the Latin word *castrum* (a camp), and the prefix said to be from the Saxon *mattock*, the implement used in clearing away trees, and to be descriptive, therefore, of the place so cleared. This explanation

of the prefix is somewhat far-fetched, since a place so cleared was always called the felled-place, or as now termed field. The Saxon word *stocca*, meaning the trunk of a tree, has been also suggested as the origin of the prefix, signifying that the town was built of wood. Another supposition is that Uttoxeter is derived from Tocester, the To evidently being a variation of Toot or Teut, and implying, therefore, the castra or camp, associated with or near the altar dedicated to Teut. The penance of Dr. Johnson has given the town, in modern times, an interest which otherwise it would not possess, and which has been referred to by some of the best writers in the English language. Of it Thomas Carlyle says: "The picture of Samuel Johnson standing bareheaded in the market-place there is one of the grandest and saddest we can paint." The facts of the case are, in brief, as follows:—Dr. Johnson's father, by name Michael Johnson, was a native of Cubley, in Derbyshire, and became established in business as a bookseller at Lichfield. Whilst residing here he was in the habit of attending the market in Uttoxeter for the sale of books. His son Samuel—afterwards the burly Doctor—spent some time, just before his twentieth year, in learning his father's business. There are books still in existence said to have been bound by his hands. During this time, his father being on one occasion unwell, requested his son to attend the book-stall at Uttoxeter in his place. Samuel, through pride, refused to comply with this request; and many years afterwards—when, in fact, he was an old man, in 1784—he voluntarily made his way to the place where the book-stall had formerly stood in Uttoxeter Market-Place, and there remained for a considerable time bare-headed in the rain to expiate his fault. It seems that at the time this occurred the Doctor was staying on a visit at Miss Seward's, at Lichfield. One morning he was missed from the breakfast table, and on enquiry of the servants, it was found that he had left the town at a very early hour on foot. The day passed without his return and some uneasiness was occasioned by his absence, when just before supper time he returned. Of course no one ventured to ask him the cause of his absence, but he volunteered the following explanation. Addressing the lady of the house, he remarked, "Madam, I beg your pardon for the abruptness of my departure from your house this morning, but I was constrained to it by my conscience. *Fifty years ago, madam, on this day*, I committed a breach of filial piety which has ever since laid heavy on my mind, and has not till this day been expiated. My father, you recollect was a bookseller, and had long been in the habit of attending Uttoxeter Market, and opening a stall of his

books during that day. Confined to his bed by indisposition he requested me, this time fifty years ago, to visit the market and attend the market in his place. But, madam, my pride prevented me from doing my duty, and I gave my father a refusal. To do away the sin of this disobedience, I this day went in a post chaise to Uttoxeter, and going into the market at the time of high business, uncovered my head, and stood with it bare an hour, before the stall which my father formerly used, exposed to the sneers of the standers by, and the inclemency of the weather—a penance by which I trust I have propitiated heaven for this only instance of my contumely to my father.” This event has been referred to by a great number of authors not only in England but in other countries. Walter Thornbury has put the whole thing into rhyme in some lines that appeared in *Once a Week* in 1861; and Nathaniel Hawthorn, the celebrated American author, visited Uttoxeter in 1857, to see the place where this remarkable incident had occurred, and was very much astonished to find that the exact spot was not known, and indeed that the circumstance itself seemed largely to have passed out of memory. I am running on however about Dr. Johnson and forgetting the object of my own visit to this town. My purpose in coming here was, as I have stated, to debate with Mr. Joseph Lakin the subject of how far Spiritualism is in harmony with the Bible. Mr. Lakin is, I believe, by trade a builder, but devotes a great portion of his time to open-air preaching. He is a rough uneducated man of the Richard Weaver type, overflowing with zeal for what he believes to be the truth, but evidently with very little charity for those who differ from him. Religion is evidently not with him a sweet and gentle influence, shedding abroad its beams of love in all directions, subduing the most turbulent passions, softening the hardest hearts, and purifying and making holy all minds upon which it operates; but a set of dogmas which are to be carried forward in the spirit of a gladiator, and forced into men’s minds, with all the bigotry of a partisan, and the intolerance of a man who believes himself to be infallible. The proclamation that “God is love” is given by such a man with a spirit of fury which makes the grandest truth that the world has ever known appear to be a paradox; and “Bless the Lord” is uttered in a tone which implies a curse on the entire human race. Mr. Lakin has, it seems, for some time past been amusing himself by denouncing Spiritualism as the work of the devil, describing spirit-mediums as witches who ought to be put to death, and designing a very uncomfortable place in Tartarus for all who believe in the modern manifestations. Mr. Bewley, the most active Spiritualist in the town, wrote to me before I left home,

asking if I would meet Mr. Lakin in debate? I replied that of course I would do so if the friends wished it, but that I thought it was attaching to him an importance which he did not merit. It seems they did wish it, and consequently I went. The Town Hall was secured for the occasion, and a very large audience was in attendance—in fact the place was well filled. The chair was taken by Mr. John Spencer, who acted most impartially throughout, and on the whole kept admirable order. Mr. Lakin's friends in the room were not very numerous, but what they lacked in numbers they made up in noise. They commenced by singing one of the Moody and Sankey hymns, but this they got through before the time announced for the meeting to begin. Mr. Lakin made his appearance in the ante-room prior to the commencement of the debate, with a sort of wild rush like a Red Indian going into battle. He wore an entire suit made of a light-coloured material, the coat being of a shooting jacket cut, with enormous pockets inside which were crammed full of large bundles of copies of the *Medium*. His whole appearance was rather repulsive to me, since there was no indication whatever that the holy and loving spirit of Christianity had operated at all upon his character. He had been, it was clear, a low and degraded specimen of humanity, but was now converted; and prided himself, as such men do, on the depths from which they have been rescued. According to a previous arrangement, I opened the question, and in so doing spoke for half-an-hour on the relationship between the modern spiritual phenomena and those detailed in the Bible, and explained the Hebrew terms translated in our version of the Scriptures, witch, enchanter, necromancer, &c., with a view to show that they had no reference whatever to spirit-mediums. On Mr. Lakin being called on to reply, he got up as it was expected to do so, but no sooner was he fairly on his feet than he commenced singing, whereupon three individuals in the audience also joined in the hymn, amidst loud and general cries of "Sit down." The chairman requested them to be quiet, but without effect, for they kept on with their singing until they had finished, the uproar, of course, being very considerable. The hymn being concluded, the chairman severely remonstrated with the disturbers in the Meeting, when one of them, evidently objecting to bear the blame of what had been done under superior orders, shouted out with great *naïveté*, "Mr. Lakin told us to do it," an announcement which was received with great laughter, the amusement caused by which, tended to some extent to restore the good feeling of the Meeting. I immediately rose and said to the chairman, "I must request you to take all this out of Mr. Lakin's time," and Mr. Lakin himself,

evidently very much surprised at my thinking he had any objection to urge to this course, said, "Well you can have all the time you want, I don't need it," which caused a good deal more fun. It soon became perfectly clear that Mr. Lakin was right, that he didn't want the time, and in fact didn't know what to do with it when he had got it. He occupied nearly a quarter an hour in reading from the *Medium* an account of a *séance* in which there was a materialisation of Mary Queen of Scots. The audience laughed incredulously when Mr. Lakin remarked, "Oh, you may laugh, but it's quite true; I appeal to Dr. Sexton whether it isn't true?" saying this he turned round to me and waited for my confirmation. I said, "Go on with your argument." "There, now," said he, "Dr. Sexton won't confirm what I say, and he ought to confirm it," which caused more merriment. He now proceeded to describe a *séance*, telling the audience that it was a meeting for religious worship, and then pointed out something in the *Medium*, which he said was opposed to Christianity, and sat down before his time had expired. The man had clearly not the slightest notion of debating, and he was evidently almost as ignorant of the teachings of the Bible as of the spiritual manifestations. When I remarked afterwards that the word *séance* which he had interpreted to mean religious worship, was a French term, simply signifying a sitting, and not necessarily connected with Spiritualism, he called out, "We don't want any French, we won't have any French." In reply to my statement, that I was not responsible for the opinions expressed in the *Medium*, or indeed in any spiritual publication, except my own; he said I was responsible for what was in the *Medium*, and he would prove that I was, which he did prove, by showing that my name appeared in its columns. To remind him that, if I were held responsible for everything contained in papers in which my name was to be found, I should have much to answer for, was an argument utterly lost upon him. During the discussion, Mr. Lakin several times grew very furious, and again and again interrupted me while I was speaking: occasionally he looked very much as though he were about to take off his coat and fight, the expression upon his countenance indicating that he was thoroughly out of temper. The *Uttoxeter New Era*, of April 5th, contained a short account of the discussion, and added—

We are sorry to say he [Dr. Sexton] was not treated with that respect and courtesy he was entitled to, whether his views were erroneous or not, but was several times interrupted by a few of the audience, and even by Mr. Lakin, although Dr. Sexton treated his opponent in the most gentlemanly manner.

A tolerably long report of the debate appeared in the *Uttoxeter Journal*, which will be found on another page of this Magazine. At the close of the discussion Mr. Lakin's friends

had evidently all deserted him with the exception, perhaps, of the three persons before referred to, for he sat down after his last speech without even the faintest attempt at applause. When we were retiring, some of those present shouted, "Dr. Sexton for ever!" which cry was also repeated as I and my friends walked through the street. Of course it would be absurd to call this a debate, since Mr. Lakin was as ignorant of logic as he was of Greek and Hebrew, and had no more notion of the rules of discussion than he had of *Newton's Principia*. Still, no doubt, some good was done, because an opportunity was presented of bringing the subject before a number of people who otherwise could not have been reached. On the Sunday morning Mr. Lakin was walking through the principal streets of the town, shouting out passages of Scripture at the top of his voice, a course of procedure admirably calculated to bring religion into contempt.

Early in the day (Sunday) Mr. Vernon drove over for me, and took me back with him to his residence at Fole Mills, where I stayed until Monday morning. The day was an exceedingly pleasant one, and I enjoyed myself greatly. Primroses and violets had just begun to show their heads, and the beautiful green of spring was spreading itself over the trees and shrubs.

On Monday morning Mr. Vernon drove me again into Uttoxeter, where I took train for Derby, having to deliver my second lecture that evening. I had promised to dine with the Rev. J. Ashby, the New Church minister. Here I met with Mr. Ward, a leading New Churchman, whom I had previously seen in London, and some other friends, with whom I spent a most agreeable afternoon. In the evening I lectured on "Objections to Spiritualism Stated and Examined." The chair was occupied by T. Roe, Junior, Esq., and the audience was larger than on the previous Friday. The lecture was well received, and at the close, when there was an opportunity for questions, the principal opponent was a Christadelphian, who, like all his class, seemed to be always blundering over two or three passages in the Old Testament. It was not difficult to dispose of him, and, this done, the meeting was brought harmoniously to a close.

The next morning (Tuesday), I took train for Scarborough, where I had to lecture that evening. The society by which I had been engaged at Scarborough was called the "Debating Society." It was formed, I believe, mainly for the purpose of discussing various questions of interest, not even excluding theology. Several meetings had been held during the year, at which warm and animated discussions had taken place, but this

was the first public lecture that had been given in connection with the society. Most of the active men are I believe Secularists, but they had selected the subject of Spiritualism, mainly because it was a good topic for debating. My approach to the town had been heralded by notices in the local papers of a somewhat exciting character. Thus the *Scarborough Mercury* of April 1st had the following paragraph :—

THE SPIRIT-WORLD.—“Pepper’s Ghost” and table-rapping, along with a great many other things connected with Spiritualism, are to be discussed by Dr. Sexton in his scientific lecture next Tuesday, so that the debate to follow it may be a very lively one. The Doctor’s learning, equal with his elocution, is of a superior order, and we anticipate an intellectual treat in the region of mysteries.

The *York Herald* of April 4th thus speaks of my visit—

DEBATING SOCIETY.—From an announcement in to-day’s *Herald* it will be seen that to-night Dr. G. Sexton will deliver a lecture on “Modern Spiritualism.” The subject is a difficult one to handle, not at all unpopular, and from the Doctor’s well-known ability there can be no doubt that a searching and scientific treatment of his subject will be given.

The *Scarborough Weekly Post* of March 31st thus announced me :—

SPIRITUALISM.—On Tuesday evening next Dr. G. Sexton, M.A., F.A.S., F.Z.S., will deliver a lecture at the Mechanics’ Hall, in connection with the Scarborough Debating Society, upon the subject of “Modern Spiritualism ; its phenomenal, philosophic, scientific, and religious aspects.” Dr. Sexton is well known in the scientific world as a man of extraordinary and universal ability. In the special subject of Spiritualism he has perhaps no equal at the present day, and as a lecturer he never fails to give satisfaction.

The lecture was given in the “Mechanics’ Hall,” and a very large audience assembled on the occasion. The discussion that took place afterwards was animated and in one or two instances rather vehement. A man named Larkin, who claimed to have known me at Newcastle six or seven years before, was evidently bent, not on discussing Spiritualism, but on displaying his own abilities, such as they were. In a most overbearing and insolent tone, he demanded me to tell him what was the nature of life, a term which I had not even mentioned during the course of my remarks. He declared his intention of “catching” me, whether I said life was an entity or that it was not, so that it is difficult to see what view I must have taken to please this would-be debater. He then rambled on at great length about Protoplasm and Darwinism, subjects which I had not even in the most indirect manner referred to in the lecture, and about which he evidently knew nothing if I had. What he was driving at I was exceedingly puzzled to make out, until it suddenly flashed across my mind that the last lecture he had heard me give at Newcastle was on that very subject. I judged therefore that he was labouring under the delusion that that lecture was only just

finished. I told the audience so, much to their amusement and greatly to the chagrin of Mr. Larkin. I advised him also to make himself acquainted with the meaning of words before he used them in a public room, after which he collapsed for the rest of the evening. There was a great deal of other opposition, but the rest was of a very gentlemanly character. The persons present were loud in their demonstrations of applause, and the announcement that I would come again was enthusiastically received. Mr. Maude, the secretary of the society, is a Secularist, but with no strong prejudice against Spiritualism. I stayed at his house and was most kindly treated. Notices of the lecture appeared in the papers on the following day, too long of course to quote here. From the report in the *Scarborough Gazette*, of April 6th, I extract the following:—

In the course of his remarks, Secularism came in for its share of admirable comment, which was entirely antagonistic to its principles and his own former convictions thereupon. He showed that Secularism was the direct negation of sound philosophy and reason. The lecturer spoke emphatically of the atheistic spirit that pervaded modern philosophy, and that scepticism and doubt were more than ever the spirit of the present age. The evidence he brought of his spiritualistic ideas was of the most cogent character, and conclusively proved that there were "more things between heaven and earth than are dreamt of" in our restricted philosophies, and that we had by no means reached the end of all knowledge. The facts he made known were simple, direct, and irresistible. The style in which they were communicated was in every respect unexceptionable. The words in which he concluded his argument were at once philosophic in form, perspicacious in meaning, and felicitous in expression. His fluency was remarkable, and carried his audience with him, by the strong common sense that pervaded it, from its exordium to its peroration.

In reference to the discussion which took place at the close of the lecture, the same paper remarked—

In the discussion, which was both lively and interesting, some confusion arose through other matter being imported into the question not relevant to its elucidation; and through an attempt being made, by a few Secular opponents, to dictate to the Lecturer as to his mode of reply, and give him information on subjects with which they were but imperfectly acquainted. The questions that were put to the lecturer were, however, very felicitously answered, and fully exhibited the Doctor's mastery over his subject in all its collateral ramifications.

On the following morning I was up early strolling through the town of Scarborough, it being the first time I had ever visited the place. Of course I had heard much of its attractions. I had seen it announced on boards at railway stations as the Queen of English watering places, which description I had of course put down as an advertising puff, but I now found that it was literally true, and certainly in no sense overrated the place. Before breakfast I visited the old castle, built by Henry II., standing on a sort of oblong peninsula, which on three of its sides descends by a rugged precipice of about 300 feet to the sea, and on the fourth slopes gradually to the main land. This must



have been a magnificent place for defence in the days gone by, since, from its elevated position, it was admirably adapted for the purpose. The old castle is, of course, now in ruins, nothing being left but portions of a dilapidated tower, built of dark sandstone. From the castle yard the view is exceedingly fine. In the course of the morning I visited the Spa, the Cliff Bridge, the new Promenade Pier, and other portions of the town, of great interest and surpassing beauty. Fortunately the day was fine, although somewhat cold. I felt that I should be glad of a week's rest at Scarborough some time during the summer, should time and funds permit, which is very questionable. In any case I could not stay now, but must away to my duties elsewhere.

Later in the day I took train to Malton, where I was announced to lecture in the evening. The subject selected was "The Claims of Modern Spiritualism upon Public Attention," and I found that a very great amount of interest had been created in the town with regard to my visit. This was the first of the series of lectures that I had been engaged to give under the auspices of the British National Association of Spiritualists, and certainly the beginning was a good one. The Institute, or Theatre, for it seemed to be a compound of both, in which the lecture was given was crowded to suffocation. The chair was taken by the Rev. John Sutcliffe, the Unitarian minister of the town, and the greatest possible attention was paid to the lecture. The local papers reported the oration at great length, one of them giving it almost entire. The *Malton Gazette*, of the 8th, concludes an accurate and lengthy report as follows:—

Dr. Sexton closed his lecture in a most eloquent peroration; in fact throughout his discourse his fluency was most remarkable, and at times he quite carried away his audience. His style was most attractive, and the facts he adduced in support of some of his statements were somewhat startling to the uninitiated, but the worthy Doctor avoided anything like sensational effect, dealing with his subject in a calm, thoughtful, and interesting manner, such as will certainly lead many of his hearers to answer his urgent request for investigation and consideration on their parts.

At the close of the lecture the Chairman announced that questions might be asked, when the only person who rose was a Mr. Bartliff, who wanted to know whether there had not been impositions practised by mediums, and whether all that Spiritualists could do had not been done by Maskelyne and Cook. I replied that Mr. Bartliff had really put two questions. First, had there not been imposture in Spiritualism, and, second, could not conjurors successfully imitate all the spiritual manifestations? To the first question I replied: Yes, no doubt there had been imposition practised in the name of Spiritualism, and no man could possibly be more anxious to find out when

and where it was than I was. I had stated in London, and I would repeat it here, that wherever I detected imposition in connection with Spiritualism I would expose it. The fact, however, of there being imposition no more proved that Spiritualism was untrue than counterfeit sovereigns proved there were no real ones. With regard to the second question, I said: Certainly not. No conjuror would ever attempt to perform his tricks under the conditions to which spirit-mediums were subjected. For my own part I knew how all the conjuring tricks were performed, having never seen one that I could not explain, but spirit-phenomena were a totally different matter. With regard to Maskelyne and Cook, I had exposed all their tricks by means of apparatus exactly like their own three years ago, the consequence of which was that they were driven to adopt new tricks. And what they were doing at the present time was not at all difficult of explanation. Mr. Joy, a member of the Council of the British National Association, in London, had, I stated, offered £1,000 to any conjuror who could perform his tricks under the same conditions that spirit-mediums obtained their manifestations. No one had, however, even put in a claim for the money, nor was likely to do so. My answers appeared satisfactory to all present, and Mr. Bartliff left without making any further observations. A day or two afterwards, however, a bright idea seems to have struck him. He would write to Maskelyne and Cook, and ask them if I had really exposed their tricks. One wonders whether Mr. Bartliff was really such a simpleton as to suppose that these showmen, whose very living depends upon the pretence that their tricks cannot be detected, would actually admit to him that all their wonderful secrets were discovered, and their magnificent mysteries reduced to most common-place affairs. Of course they would admit nothing of the kind, so they wrote him back a letter in which it would appear they resorted to their old game of slandering me. As, however, the letter as a whole is not made public, I have no means of ascertaining its contents, but can easily judge from past experience of the fraternity of unscrupulous jugglers. A portion of the letter did find its way into one of the papers, as will be seen from the following paragraph which appeared in the *Malton Messenger* of April 15th:

DR. SEXTON'S LECTURE ON SPIRITUALISM.—It will be remembered that at the close of the lecture given by Dr. Sexton in the Literary Institute, last week, Mr. R. H. Bartliff asked the lecturer if conjurors could not produce the same phenomena, especially referring to Maskelyne and Cooke; and that Dr. Sexton replied that he had exposed the tricks of those gentlemen some years ago, and that it was impossible for any conjuror to perform the same things that a spirit-medium could do. Mr. Bartliff accordingly wrote to Messrs. Maskelyne and Cooke, asking if Dr. Sexton's answers were correct, and he has just received from Mr. J. N. Maskelyne a letter in which he says, "In reference to Dr. Sexton

I may state that the tricks he pretended to expose had no reference to Spiritualism whatever. The fact is, that he started with the hope of obtaining a livelihood, his stock-in-trade being some old lumber bought from a daughter of the late Professor Anderson, but he failed miserably as an exposé of the conjurors. His assertion that it is impossible for other than spirit-media to obtain the 'phenomena,' is disproved twice daily in this hall, where all the latest phenomenal developments are regularly reproduced. For further information I must refer you to my work upon *Modern Spiritualism*, shortly to be published. You will find this delusion and humbug fully exposed therein."

Of course the statements in this paragraph are quite in keeping with all the rest that are made by these men. As soon as I saw it I sent the following letter in reply:—

*To the Editor of the "Malton Messenger."*

SIR.—Seldom, indeed, is it that I reply to any erroneous statements that may appear respecting me in the newspapers. I am in the habit of addressing some hundreds of different audiences in the course of the year, and have a right, therefore, to expect criticism, sometimes of an unfavourable character. Besides, to reply to all the attacks, direct and indirect, to which any public man is subject, would necessitate the labour of half-a-dozen clerks, to say nothing of the turmoil in which such a course of procedure would keep him constantly involved. The origin of the paragraph that appears respecting me, however, in your last issue, is so unusual that I feel called upon to depart from my customary practice, and to trouble you with a few observations upon the subject with which it deals. It seems that Mr. Bartliff took the trouble of writing to some London conjurors, asking them whether it was true that I had exposed their tricks as stated by me at my lecture, a course of procedure which argues little for the intelligence of your townsman. Did Mr. Bartliff really imagine that this was a likely method of arriving at the truth? If so I can only say that he can have had very little experience of the ways of the world. These men, chagrined beyond measure at the exposition of their so-called marvels, and manifesting their impotent rage by putting into circulation all sorts of false and slanderous tales respecting me, as they have done, would hardly be selected by any intelligent man as persons likely to give an impartial and unbiassed opinion upon the question under consideration. Assuredly it would have been better for Mr. Bartliff, or any one else who was desirous of learning the truth upon the matter, to have read my little book, entitled *Spirit-Mediums and Conjurors*, and to have made enquiries of some of the thousands of persons who saw my exposure of these tricks in London, Glasgow, Birmingham, Manchester, Bury, Brighton, Eastbourne, Worcester, and other towns, or even to have asked me to allow him the opportunity of seeing the exposure in order that he might be in a position to judge for himself. It seems, however, that Mr. Bartliff thought otherwise, and thereby showed, I think, that his object was not to discover truth, but to learn how he might oppose Spiritualism and attack me as its advocate. At the close of the lecture that I gave in your town, upon Mr. Bartliff putting his question I treated him as a gentleman, which treatment I regret to say he has not reciprocated. Should I come again to Malton, and Mr. Bartliff presents himself as a questioner, he may rely upon it I shall know how to deal with him.

Now, Sir, respecting the statements made in the paragraph under consideration: if the tricks that I exposed had no reference to Spiritualism, how is it that these very tricks had been performed in all parts of the country for many years as an exposure of spiritual manifestations. That this was so can be proved by the bills and advertisements of the conjurors, and by the testimony of thousands of persons who saw their performances. In point of fact, a score or two of conjurors are drawing audiences at the present time solely by advertising that they expose Spiritualism—a fact of itself sufficient to show how great is the interest that is being felt in this subject. Let these men drop all allusion to Spiritualism, and simply go on with their juggling, and what would be the result? Why they know well enough that they would then perform to empty benches. They trade upon this fact, and are therefore indirectly indebted to Spiritualism for a livelihood.

The assertion that I purchased any "old lumber" of a "daughter of the late Professor Anderson," is simply an audacious falsehood, as is also the statement that I ever thought of obtaining a livelihood by exposing jugglers. But these matters, as far as I can see, do not affect the public, and may be therefore passed over. I have no wish to enter into any controversy with these men. What I have done is before the world, let the world judge of it. I have been made the victim of the vilest slanders that ever an evil-disposed brain concocted, because I took the course that I did in defending what I believe to be the truth, against the miserable burlesques of showmen. I have by me a dozen or more anonymous letters, written to some of the leading men of the towns where I have gone to lecture, full of the most atrocious falsehoods respecting my character, all of which serve to show the *animus* that these men introduced into the question, and the unprincipled way in which they have acted. In conclusion, I repeat what I said in the lecture, that no conjuror will even attempt to perform his tricks under the same conditions that mediums are subject to in what is called the "spirit-circle."

Apologising for troubling you with this letter,

I am, &c.,

Newcastle-on-Tyne, April 19th, 1876.

GEORGE SEXTON.

The effect of the lecture in Malton appears to have been everything that could be desired, and there can be little doubt that another may be given very shortly. Spiritualism is, to a great extent, new in the town; but there are several earnest workers, who, now that the ball is set rolling, can easily keep it going. Mr. W. Copperthwaite was present at the lecture, and shook me warmly by the hand afterwards; and many others crowded around to congratulate me on the success of this, the first, effort to promulgate Spiritualism at Malton.

On the following day (Thursday) the debate was announced to commence between myself and Mr. Watts, at Newcastle, and, therefore, I had to hurry away early in the morning, in order to be in time for the battle of the evening. The discussion took place, as announced, in the Lecture Room, Nelson Street, and very large audiences attended. The number of Secularists greatly predominated on the first two nights, but they were evidently in a minority towards the end of the discussion. On the Thursday and Friday evenings the subject was: "Is Secularism sufficient to promote the Well-being of Mankind?" Of course I laboured to show—and I may, perhaps, be excused for thinking with success—that this Secularism was utterly insufficient to promote the happiness of mankind. As, however, a review of the debate appears on another page, written by Mr. Aaron Watson, who was present, and whose name will be remembered as the Manchester correspondent of the *Christian Spiritualist* for many years, I need not refer to it more fully myself.

On Saturday I left Newcastle, by the mid-day train, for Glasgow, having been announced to preach there on the following day. I reached the "second City in the Empire" at half-past five; my old friends Bowman and Nisbet met me at

the station, and with them I made my way to Mr. Nisbet's house, where I was to stay. On the following evening (Sabbath, 9th) I preached in the Mechanics' Hall, Canning Street, Calton, on the "Relation of the Ancient Faiths to Christianity." The weather was very unfavourable, the rain falling in torrents during the greater part of the evening; but, despite this fact, the congregation was large. Several of my old Scotch friends were present at the service, the rest I had no opportunity of seeing, my stay in Glasgow being so short.

Back again to Newcastle I hurried on the following day (Monday), to conclude the debate. On the last two evenings the subject for discussion was: "Is Christianity of Divine Origin and adapted to the Real Wants of Mankind?" The interest experienced during the previous week had not only not abated, but was considerably increased, the Christian party attending in large numbers. At the close I received the hearty congratulations of great numbers of good Christian men, who personally were quite unknown to me, and several letters were sent to me, thanking me for the manner in which I had vindicated Christian truth. Amongst the latter was a document signed by seven persons, in which the writers expressed, on behalf of themselves and their friends, the "great pleasure and benefit" which they derived from the "very able and masterly manner" in which I had treated the subject under discussion. The debate will certainly not be soon forgotten, and I have no doubt that much good will result therefrom.

The discussion over, I had to leave Newcastle to fulfil my other engagements. On the following day, (Wednesday), I lectured at Seghill, a colliery village about eight miles from Newcastle, of which I have previously given a description. My subject here was "The Alleged Phenomena of Spiritualism. Are they True? and if so, do they prove the continued Existence of Man after Death?" I was compelled to spend the night here, as there was no means of getting away, and I stayed therefore, with Mr. Brown, a Primitive Methodist local preacher, with whom I spent an hour or two's most agreeable conversation after the lecture was over. Mr. Brown I found to be a very intelligent man and familiar with most of the controversies that have taken place between Christians and Sceptics. He had gone to Newcastle every night to listen to the debate between myself and Mr. Watts, and expressed himself as highly satisfied with the result. During the night and on the following morning there was a very heavy fall of snow, and we seemed to be carried back into the very middle of winter. From Seghill I went to Blyth, where I lectured on the Thursday, on "Spiritualism in Harmony with the Bible." This lecture was given in

the Central Hall, the largest building in the town, and was listened to with rapt attention by a numerous company of highly respectable and intelligent people.

The following day being Good Friday, and trains running but seldom, I was compelled to start very early in the morning in order to get back to Newcastle, so as to be able to travel in the afternoon to Chester-le-Street, where I had to lecture in the evening. I reached Newcastle at about half-past nine, deposited my luggage at the central station and went on to Mr. Barkas's house, where I had arranged to spend the day. Mr. Blackburn of Manchester was also in Newcastle, and I had the pleasure of meeting him at dinner at Mr. Barkas's. In the afternoon I took train for Chester-le-Street, accompanied by Mr. J. T. Rhodes of Newcastle. Here I found an unusually large audience assembled in the Co-operative Hall to listen to my lecture on "Modern Spiritualism in Harmony with the Bible." The reception I met with here was gratifying in the extreme. Chester-le-Street I had never visited before nor indeed am I quite certain whether I had even heard of it. It is a small town, pleasantly situated partly in a valley and partly on a gentle acclivity, about six miles from Durham and eight from Newcastle-on-Tyne. It consists mainly of one broad street about half a mile in length. The river Wear skirts it on the East and receives a small tributary which runs through the town. The surrounding scenery is very pretty, and a very charming view may be obtained from the railway station, which is situated at about the highest point of elevation in the town. Spiritualistic meetings have been held here for some time past and there are a goodly number of Spiritualists resident in the place. A tolerably lengthy report of the lecture appeared in the *Chester-le-Street Times* of the 22nd, and the proceeds of the lecture were I believe devoted to sending a copy of this paper to ministers and other influential persons resident in the neighbourhood. Mr. Robinson, the Secretary of the Society, is a most active and energetic worker in the cause.

From Chester-le-Street, I took train on the following day for Middlesboro'-on-Tees, where I had to preach on the Sunday. I reached Middlesboro' between five and six o'clock on the Saturday evening, and made my way to the residence of Mr. Joseph Allison, in Boundary Road, where I was to stay.

On Sunday I preached two sermons in the New Jerusalem Church, the subject taken by me in the morning being, "This Thy Day," and in the evening, "Without God in the World." A considerable number of Secularists were present in the evening, who, with their usual good manners, left the church in a body the very instant the sermon was concluded. The New

Church friends here were desirous that I should give a lecture on Secularism in the town, before I left the neighbourhood, and I therefore arranged to return to Middlesboro' for that purpose, on the following Thursday.

On the Monday morning I crossed the river to Port Clarence and took train for Hartlepool, from thence on to Sunderland, and so to Seaham Harbour, where I had to lecture in the evening. At the Henden Station, Sunderland, I met Mr. Rhodes, who accompanied me the rest of the journey. The lecture here was on the "Claims of Modern Spiritualism upon Public Attention," and was given in the Londonderry Literary Institute, a very fine and commodious building. A tolerably good audience assembled on the occasion, and the lecture was well received. I was told that I should have some violent opposition, as one or two persons were present who had considerably badgered Mr. Everitt, on the occasion of his giving a lecture in the town; but no opposition was forthcoming, not even to the asking of a question. I found in Seaham Harbour some earnest Spiritualists, and think that, with a little effort, a successful cause may be established here. I stayed for the night with Mr. Emmerson, a draper in North Terrace, and I beg to thank him here for his kindness. On the following morning I went over the town, and inspected the harbour, docks, shipping and other points of interest.

From Seaham Harbour I returned to Newcastle, and was met at the station by Mr. W. Couchman, who had kindly presided on three evenings out of the four at the debate, Mr. Edmund Procter having taken the chair on the first evening. Mr. Couchman is a hale and hearty vegetarian and teetotaller, and withal an earnest New Churchman. My object in returning to Newcastle on this occasion was to attend a tea meeting which the New Church friends had got up in honour of my visit. This tea meeting was to have been held on the Tuesday but was unavoidably postponed till the Wednesday. A short account of it will be found in another part of the Magazine, and therefore I may simply say here that I feel very grateful to the friends for the consideration they showed me, and the complimentary manner in which they were kind enough to speak of my efforts. The meeting itself was a most harmonious one, the best possible spirit prevailed, and for myself I could really say that I felt it good to be there. These social gatherings with kindred spirits, where no discord is felt and no disorder admitted, always seem to me a foretaste of the great Hereafter, of which Archbishop Trench has well said :

The tasks, the joys of earth the same in heaven will be,  
Only the little brook has widened to a sea.

On the Thursday I returned to Middlesboro' for the purpose of lecturing on "Twenty Years' Personal Experience of Scepticism, with reasons for renouncing it and embracing Christianity." The Rev. J. K. Bealey, Vicar of Middlesboro', had kindly invited me to become his guest, and at his residence I consequently took up my abode. My lecture was given on the Thursday evening, in the Town Hall, and although the rain fell heavily during the evening a tolerably large audience assembled. The lecture was enthusiastically received, and although an opportunity for discussion was allowed, and had been announced on the bills, no opposition of any importance was forthcoming. The Secularists who were present evidently had not the courage to defend their views. At the close of the meeting the Rev. J. K. Bealey, in moving a vote of thanks to me, was good enough to say that my lecture "was the most able, convincing, and eloquent lecture on the subject they had yet listened to," which, considering what lectures had been given in the town, and the standing of the lecturers, was certainly a very high compliment. I believe it is intended that I shall visit Middlesboro' again very soon.

From Middlesboro' I returned to London, having been absent just three weeks. In that three weeks I had addressed eighteen public meetings, and travelled between thirteen hundred and fourteen hundred miles.

During my absence my place was supplied at the Cavendish Rooms on two Sundays by Mr. J. W. Farquhar, and on the other by my friend Mr. Young, of Swindon, to both of whom my thanks are due for their kindness. On Sunday, 23rd, I resumed my ministrations and delivered a discourse on "Sceptical Homage to Christ." Whether I can keep on my Church here is very questionable. Certainly I cannot without some assistance. I am willing to give my services free of charge, but I cannot afford to sustain a loss, and at the present time there is a very heavy loss which falls on me and on me alone. There is a loss on this Magazine which I have to bear, and to add another loss to that, in addition to the labour involved in connection with both, is simply to allow myself to be completely crushed by pecuniary responsibilities. I refer to this subject with the very greatest reluctance, but justice to myself demands that I should seek for assistance, and failing to obtain it, relinquish the work, however reluctantly, which I find my powers and my means inadequate to accomplish. For the past three or four years I have devoted myself almost exclusively to the spiritual movement and have worked harder in the cause than almost any other living man. For this I have not only not received any remuneration, but have been compelled to sustain



very heavy losses on the work in which I have been engaged. This I cannot continue, nor ought it to be expected of me. Should I receive the assistance required, I will cheerfully accept it and go on with the work in which I am engaged, but should I fail, I must relinquish a struggle in which I should sacrifice my health—perhaps my life—and leave the work to be done by other men who may be more fortunate in obtaining help than I have been.

GEORGE SEXTON.

London, April 25th, 1876.

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## HYMNS FOR THE SPIRITUAL CHURCH.

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### THE TRUE BREAD AND WINE.

THE bread of Truth, the wine of Love,  
This bread the Saviour brake;  
It fell like manna from above,  
In every word He spake.

And still it doth our hunger meet,  
And satisfies alway;  
This bread is ever fresh and sweet,  
And is our strength to-day.

The wine to all He freely gave,  
To poor, and lame, and blind;  
At marriage-feast, beside the grave,  
And on the cross resigned.

This wine so pure, so rich, so warm,  
Still from His heart doth flow,  
To cheer the heart of those who mourn,  
And set their souls aglow.

That sacred cup—true Holy Grail,  
O'erflowing to the brim  
With choicest wine, shall never fail  
To those who trust in Him.

Break ye the bread to all who need,  
And give to all the wine;  
So may the soul be nourished,  
And life grow more divine.

T. S.

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## NOTES AND GLEANINGS.

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### COMPLIMENTARY TEA TO DR. SEXTON, AT NEWCASTLE.

ON Wednesday, April 19th, some friends connected with the New Church, in Newcastle, held a social tea meeting in honour of Dr. Sexton. Mr. MacLagan, the leader of the society in the town, was voted to the chair. After Miss Couchman had favoured the company with "The Sabbath Evening Chimes," on the piano,—

Mr. MACLAGAN said he was exceedingly glad to see so many friends present on such an occasion. They had met to do honour to a gentleman whom they all respected, both for his abilities and his opinions. It was unnecessary for him to introduce Dr. Sexton to them. He had distinguished himself both in his literary, his scientific, and his philosophical abilities, and they were all acquainted with his worth. They had most of

them been present at the debate in which Dr. Sexton had so recently and so ably defended Christianity, and they were able to appreciate his argumentative powers. And not only had he gone forth to the world and defended those principles which they all held to be true, but he had given it the example of a great and noble life.

Dr. SEXTON—in the course of an eloquent speech, in which he referred to the growth and influence of the teaching of Swedenborg—said that, some short time since, he had stated at a meeting of the Swedenborg Society, in London, what he might repeat now, that he believed that if he had been acquainted with the writings of Swedenborg twenty-five years ago, it would have saved him many years of anxious doubt and sceptical opinion. On lamenting, one day, to a New Church minister the loss of the years thus spent in unbelief, the minister had replied to him that perhaps this was God's method of educating him (Dr. Sexton) for the work he had to perform, and the time, therefore, might, after all, not have been wasted. For himself, he would gladly take that view, but it was not easy to arrive at such a conclusion. When it was known that he had abandoned the Secularist platform, and had devoted himself to the promulgation of Christian truth, he had been requested to join the ranks of many denominations. He said this without any vanity, or without wishing to over-rate his own abilities. He had been offered pulpits in different denominations, but up to the present time had accepted none. His tendency had been at first towards Unitarianism, and his friends naturally expected that he would settle down in that denomination. He soon came to see, however, that the great central truth of Christianity was the supreme divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, and that if this were removed the whole fabric would fall. Wherever he went, he must, at all events, preach this truth. After explaining, at great length, the way in which the teachings of Swedenborg had influenced his mind, he said that he intended devoting the rest of his life to the preaching of the Gospel and the promulgation of Christian truth.

Mrs. PIPER sang "The Banks and Braes of Bonny Doon" with much effect, after which,

Mr. BURN said it afforded him the greatest pleasure to be present on such an occasion. He had met Dr. Sexton under very different circumstances, but even then he listened to him with delight, for he was convinced that, with some modifications, his views, even then, were those of the true Church. He had always found, too, that Dr. Sexton expressed and defended those views with a force, a power, and a fulness of knowledge, which he had never met with before. He thought that Dr. Sexton

was eminently qualified to represent the views of the New Church to the world.

Mr. JOSEPH WILKINSON, an aged and respected member of the Society, said that he had a very extensive knowledge of New Church doctrines, and had heard all the New Church preachers, but he had never heard the teachings of Swedenborg enforced with such power, and carrying such conviction, both to the minds of Christians and of sceptics, as by Dr. Sexton.

Mr. COUCHMAN, of Tynemouth, addressed the company, and was followed by

Mr. LYNN, who said that it gave him considerable pleasure to meet with Dr. Sexton. He was pleased at the position which that gentleman had taken up, for he was convinced that there was no man living who was better fitted for taking a high place on the Christian platform. The manner in which he had defended Christianity in the recent debate had induced him to form a very high estimate of his powers. Mr. Lynn spoke at considerable length in regard to the teachings of the New Church, after which Dr. Sexton responded to a second call which was made upon him, and a very enjoyable evening was brought to a close.

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DEBATE ON SPIRITUALISM AT UTTOXETER, BETWEEN  
DR. SEXTON AND MR. LAKIN.

This debate, which was announced in our last issue, came off on Saturday evening, April 1st, in the Town Hall, Uttoxeter. Great interest was felt in the discussion, and a large audience assembled. The *Uttoxeter Journal* of the 5th ult. gave the following report, which although brief may be looked upon as tolerably correct:—

DISCUSSION ON SPIRITUALISM.—On Saturday evening, the discussion between Dr. Sexton, of London, and Mr. J. Lakin, of Uttoxeter, as to whether Spiritualism is supported or condemned by the Bible, took place, as announced, at the Town Hall. There was a considerable number of persons present, all of whom manifested a lively interest in the proceedings. The chair was ably filled by Mr. J. Spencer, who, in a short preliminary address, after referring to the object of the meeting, stated that though he must not be understood to identify himself with the opinions of either of the speakers, yet he was confident both of them were about to speak that which they conscientiously believed to be true, and begged the audience to abstain from all interruptions by way either of approval or disapprobation. Dr. Sexton then addressed the meeting for half an hour, and began by stating how he had been induced by the repeated requests of a friend to undertake the part he was about to play in this discussion, namely, to show that Spiritualism was not in opposition to the teachings of the Bible. In the first place, if there was any good in the movement, that good must spring from God; he (the speaker) would presently show how good had arisen from the movement, which fact being once acknowledged, must unquestionably prove that the movement (*i.e.*, Spiritualism) did not owe its origin to evil sources. He (Dr. Sexton) need not point out the fact that every great discovery, every invention had always been opposed on the same grounds.

The printing press when first introduced was said to be the work of the devil, even the invention of table forks was ascribed to the same agency, the common Congreve matches even took their name "Lucifers" from the same source. Could we then wonder that Spiritualism casting as it does so new, and yet, to those who can understand and accept it, so glorious a light on much that we cannot otherwise understand, should be regarded as springing from the same origin? If our friend (Mr. Lakin) preaches from the Bible, he can scarcely affirm that Spiritualism is opposed to this book *per se*. "Will he then ascribe one kind of phenomena to agencies of a good character, another to those of a bad character?" The Doctor then drew a comparison between modern spiritualistic phenomena and those related in the Bible, instancing "the burning bush, from which God spoke to Moses," "the voices which spoke to St. Paul," "the writing at Belshazzar's feast," "the angels giving strength to Daniel," "releasing the apostles from prison," and again "the three angels who appeared to Abraham," not only in a palpable form, but even partaking of food; and yet again Ezekiel being taken up by the hair of his head and carried away to confront a number of men who had lived, but were then dead. "My friend would doubtless maintain that Spiritualism is contrary to the Mosaic law which says 'thou shalt not suffer a witch to live,' but then it would be necessary to prove that Spiritualists are witches." Again what was meant by witches, enchanters, necromancers, who certainly were condemned by the Bible? The Hebrew word rendered in English by witch was *mechashsheph*, one who used magical songs, mutterings, incantations, and also to signify fumigation, as the offering of incense to idols. Enchanter, *menachesh*, in the same tongue, one who practises divination by serpents, or by the entrails of animals, in point of fact serpent sorcery. There was a wide difference between the meaning of these words in ancient and modern times. Mr. Lakin might say seers were condemned: but this was because the art had been abused as had even the custom of offering sacrifices, which at first was lawful, but was afterwards prohibited for the same reason. Was communion with the dead forbidden? How could it be wrong to hold converse with a friend to-morrow, with whom it was lawful to consult to-day? Men do not die, they merely pass from one shore to another; a glorious truth that has come to light in modern times: we too shall follow in their footsteps and render an account of our actions as we form them here. "And now let me tell our friend a fact he does not know, and which cannot fail to show that good does come of this movement. I was once a thorough sceptic, denying even a future state of existence, but the truths of Spiritualism led me back to Christianity; this is not my case alone, but of hundreds I could mention, and to object and oppose on such grounds as these is neither generous nor wise." The speaker here concluded with a few remarks on the prevalence of scepticism in the present day, and resumed his seat amidst a general expression of applause. Mr. Lakin now came forward, and at the same moment three individuals among the audience got up and began, amidst loud shouts of "sit down," to sing a hymn, which was drowned by an uproar which at once arose in the back of the Hall. On the chairman expostulating and threatening to dissolve the meeting, one of the aforesaid individuals explained that the singing was attempted at the request of Mr. Lakin himself, and on the latter's appeal to the audience to let the meeting proceed, order was at last restored. Mr. Lakin then spoke to the following effect: "The Spiritualists call their meetings *séances*; a *séance* means religious worship; the number of persons required to constitute a *séance* is from three to twelve, and in all cases must what they call 'a medium' be present. This medium requires to be fully developed, that is, must have certain forces to produce good phenomena. The phenomena are of various kinds, such as moving of bodies without material agency, sounds through solid substances, alteration of the weight of bodies, levitation—that is, mediums are lifted up and carried horizontally through the air; luminous appearances, direct writing, appearance of phantoms, and communications with the spirits of the departed. [Mr. Lakin then read from a Spiritualistic Journal, called the *Medium*, an account of the appearance of a spirit, professing to be that of Mary, Queen of Scots]. Now call this what you please, I call it religious worship, (a laugh) no doubt people will not believe it, but that will not alter facts. Scores of people have tested it; there is no trickery. If you don't believe it, put a £5 note in your pocket, go

to London, and see for yourselves. Now this puts the medium in the same position as the woman in the xxvii. chap. of Samuel; exactly the same phenomenon appears; no man can dispute it, and what good came of it? None; only evil, a message of death to Saul himself. Talking about seers, in no place in the Bible, from Genesis to Revelations, can we find an instance where it is commanded to consult with the dead. The Lord slew Saul because he transgressed in this respect, which shows that seeking after knowledge in this way was not lawful. Again, our Lord tells us, in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, that if they 'believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.' Again, we see a medium advertising to give her services at the charge of a guinea; verily, if she has a master, she must bring him great gain (applause). If any of you wanted to go to these *séances* they would have to get an introduction; they will not admit everybody, they will not admit a man like me. You see these papers [spiritualistic journals] these are their Bibles; and yet the name of Jesus is not mentioned in them five times. They teach that the blood of atonement is opposed to reason, it is a relic of ancient paganism, and pulpit teaching is the greatest swindle ever invented." (Sensation.) Dr. Sexton then replied in the following manner: "I think all reasonable persons will agree with me that we have heard no argument against Spiritualism in the speech of our friend; we have had a rambling statement to the effect that one medium does this, and another does that; and, lastly, a packet of papers is held up, which Mr. Lakin calls our Bible. The *Medium* is a paper expressing views, not mine, and I am not here to defend its opinions. [At this point a further interruption was made by the audience, which, however, was soon put a stop to, and Dr. Sexton continued.] Why does Mr. Lakin tell you about what he has never seen? He says he would not be admitted; that is untrue, let him come with me and I will procure him admission to a *séance* without his having to put his hand in his pocket. He says *séance* means religious worship; that is ridiculous—*séance* is a French word, meaning sitting—"We don't want any French," from Mr. Lakin, who was sternly silenced by the Doctor, who reminded him that he had been allowed to speak without interruption on his (Dr. Sexton's) part—and has nothing to do with religion; though I have, indeed, heard prayers made at these sittings, which even Mr. Lakin would not object to."—In answer to an objection advanced by Mr. Lakin, to the effect that it was not lawful to hold communion with the dead, Dr. Sexton instanced the vision of Ezekiel before referred to—related in Ezekiel vii.—maintaining that these seventy men, being dead, must of necessity have been spirits, and nobody would venture to say there was anything unlawful in this affair. The learned speaker then went on to say that these phenomena, which most unquestionably existed in ancient times, though they had certainly ceased, on account of the corruptions which had crept into the Church, had been common at a far later period than was generally supposed. He spoke of the vision of Polycarp, by which he was warned of the manner of his death, the voices which spoke to him when on his way to the stake; and similar well-authenticated instances related of Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch; Justin, and others. Though these phenomena certainly had ceased for a time—owing to the corruptions of the Church, before alluded to—yet there was no doubt that God, in His glorious goodness, had been pleased, in these later times, to revive them outside of the Church, in order to lead back many to Christ.—Mr. Lakin, on again coming forward, stated that God hath at all times worked after His will, without respect to man's reasoning. Why, we might say, was there one Adam, not ten Adams? When men were dead they knew not anything, but rested from their labours. "Whatever Dr. Sexton may say, he has got the letter which killeth. I affirm, and can prove it, this Spiritualism is the mystery of iniquity spoken of in the Holy Scripture. What was the temple of God? Man's heart, for God 'dwelleth not in temples made of hands.' This (Spiritualism) is Satan sitting in the temple of God." Mr. Lakin quoted several texts to prove that this was the "mystery of iniquity" alluded to, that should be in the last days; but, owing doubtless to the excitement under which he laboured, he occasionally wandered a little from his subject, and it was difficult to understand exactly what he meant. Dr. Sexton then proposed a vote of thanks to the Chairman, for the admirable way in which he had con-

ducted the meeting; this was warmly seconded by Mr. Lakin, and carried by a unanimous show of hands on the part of the audience. The proceedings then terminated with the Doxology, sung by nearly all present, at the suggestion of Mr. Spencer.

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#### BELIEF IN OMENS BY A FELLOW OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY.

The following extract from the *Autobiography of A. B. Granville, M.D., F.R.S.*, published in 1874, will no doubt prove interesting to our readers, as it shows the influence of what are called superstitions upon the mind of a man of great erudition and extensive scientific knowledge.

Some of my readers will feel disposed to laugh outright at a learned doctor admitting he is an inveterate believer in all sorts of popular superstitions, forebodings, and presentiments. I am alarmed at the spilling of a salt-cellar; I don't like to meet a hearse while going out of the street door; I would not undertake a journey or any important work on a Friday; and the breaking of a looking-glass would throw me into fits. Now this morning, soon after our *tête-à-tête déjeuner*, I became suddenly depressed in spirits, to such degree that my fair hostess fancied I had been taken ill. This state of nervousness and depression endured after I had retired to my hotel, and was making ready my luggage for my positive departure at noon on the succeeding day, leaving out only the evening dress for the dinner and Opera. On taking my place at dinner the knife and fork laid before me crossway startled me (I dare say I turned pale), but I said nothing. There were two attendants. At the next course the other valet replaced my plate, and again the fatal cross was laid before me! I looked round to the three guests to see if it was the habit of the servants of the house; they had no cross, only the doctor: and again the third time the same symbol made its appearance before me with the setting of the dessert and corresponding plate, with gilt knife and fork, the two latter of which articles again contrived to be laid down in a crucial form. Ah! now there was no mistake. Some great crossing was about to befall me. I had better shut myself up for the rest of the day, give up the proposed drive and the Opera, and wait until I can escape in the morning from the doomed city. To make matters still more formidable, I found, on looking at my calendar, that it was Friday. All this mind-work I of course kept to myself, albeit I must have appeared rather more stupid than was my wont.—Vol. I., p. 413, &c.

It is very singular that a few hours after this last named circumstance Dr. Granville was arrested, and hence the prognostication was verified.

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#### THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN A SECT AND A CHURCH.

The distinction between a Sect and a Church is obvious enough, and should be kept clearly in view, and one never confounded with the other. A Church organizes itself around the whole Christ, believing His truth to be infinite; His advent, therefore, to be perpetual; His spiritual coming always fresh and new. He is not merely the Christ of two thousand years ago, but the Christ of to day. A sect posits itself on some fragment of truth, some private interpretation of it made by fallible men, and it grasps this, and holds it, as the last word

in theology. Hence a sect has no future, and can only keep repeating a worn-out creed for ever. A Church, while it holds on to the old truths which are central and primary, is open always to the Lord for new light, life, and inspiration; and so the old truths never become dead and stale, but are seen ever with new settings and relations, and with new illustrations of what before was dark and mysterious. A sect is always becoming partial and narrow, and a thing of the past. A Church, if only it be a true one—that is, the very body of Christ—is always growing towards a genuine comprehension and Catholicity; for, being His body and robe, it changes in the transfigurations of His light and love. Indeed, the reason of this notion that Christianity is learned out, and that something else must be hurried up in its place, lies mainly in the fact that men have drawn it off into creeds, and claimed the creeds as the whole of it. And so they study it there, where it has turned into stone and fossil, and not in the living Christ who melts through the ages, and breaks through the worn-out creeds themselves, as the husks and the sheddings of the coming harvest. Looking, therefore, to the Master, claiming to be His minister, and acknowledging fealty to Him alone, I will never ask whether the truth He gives me tallies with the notions of this denomination or that, and whether men choose to call it Unitarianism or Calvinism. I do not believe that any of these names exhaust the truth as it is in Jesus, or are anything more than the first stammerings of His everlasting Gospel. And while I would fellowship all denominations who have the Christian spirit, and work with them so far forth as I could work freely, and to good ends, I would never get moored with any of them in the flats and shallows where the living stream of Christian history is sure to pass by them, and leave them high and dry upon the sand.—*Rev. E. H. Sears.*

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## Correspondence.

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### THE PHILOSOPHY OF PERCEPTION.

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*To the Editor of the "Spiritual Magazine."*

SIR,—You are wise to find sympathy for those opponents who object to the dark *séance*. But what is light? A question more easily asked than answered; and one which, in fact, has never been answered—except that an ethereal action set going by a luminous object makes a sensible impression on us, we call light; but that there is any such thing, outside the mind, is mere illusion; and the universe is absolute darkness and solemn silence, and, so to speak, is an

eternal dark *séance*; hence, in reality, there is no such thing as light such as we seem to perceive, and the so-called dark or night side of nature has its flora and fauna as well as the light side; as there are flowers that blossom in the winter cold, and, strangely exceptional, resist the cold, which is immediate death to the summer flower—the reason of the exception no one can tell.

But in respect to light, the difficulty is, perhaps, rather as to vision; all the mechanical theories on which seem to me most absurd, since we must admit a spiritual principle in the end, which seems to light up space and enables us to perceive objects, and know what they are, and where they are, and to walk up to them without any mistake, but which has a physical cause in the transmitted ethereal action, admitted into the dark *séance*, as it were, in the chamber of your photographic doings, as well as into the dark chamber of the mind, be it brain or spirit, or an action between the two, as I believe; and which, like as a vital spirit-lamp, casts its beams far into the corresponding ethereal medium without, and thus giving us vision—the sense of direction and distance—and a true impression of things. Now, in the dark *séance*, in the sensitive nature of the mind, it may be necessary that the physical stimulus of light should be withdrawn, and that the attention should not be distracted by the sight of objects, and also that the inner light and power should not be diffused in space, as it certainly is in ordinary vision; but that the power and intuitive sense be confined and concentrated within, as is the case in the trance condition and with a person in deep thought, waiting upon the thoughts to come, as was the case with Newton; and, in fact, it is thinking in the dark—that is, an abstraction from all disturbing sense impressions; and hence it is that clairvoyance more frequently occurs in the trance or mesmeric state, and often near death, when the body begins to lose sensibility. But, from what I have said, it will be seen that our ordinary perceptions are really intuitive, or a species of clairvoyance; and when that is really recognised, persons will not have the same disinclination to credit the higher phenomena and extraordinary and exceptional instances.

HENRY G. ATKINSON, F.G.S.

## SONGS OF THE SOUL.

### AT SCHOOL.

MUTATION is the law of Earth:

Naught here is permanent,  
From the first hour of mortal birth,  
Till our last breath is spent.

The child, the schoolboy, and the man,  
Each other quick succeed;  
Until we reach the utmost span  
By Providence decreed.

We taste the sweet and tender joy  
Of friendship, home, and love;  
The mind and heart here find employ,  
And all their powers may prove.

And many a bitter cup we drink,  
And shadows gloom around;  
We stand and shudder on the brink  
Of deeps we cannot sound.

And then a sudden gleam of light  
Athwart the darkened sky,  
Reveals unto our gladdened sight  
Where safety still is nigh.

The earth, the sky, the seasons change  
But with the changing years,  
The mind takes wider, loftier range,  
To farthest hemispheres.

If right we read life's mystic scroll,  
This is its epitome;  
A spinning nursery of soul  
The world is; not our home!

T. S.